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**CONTEXTUALIZATION OF SUFI
SPIRITUALITY IN
17th-18th CENTURY CHINA:
THE ROLE OF LIU ZHI (c. 1662 – c. 1730)**

A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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October 2014

Abstract

Contextualization of Sufi Spirituality in 17th-18th Century China: The Role of Liu Zhi (c. 1662 – c.1730)

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Islamic literati actively translated and wrote Islamic texts in Chinese for use by Hui Muslims and the Scripture Hall Education System in China. They used Confucian terms extensively to explain Islamic thought. This phenomenon has been interpreted recently in China as a process of Confucianization of Islam. Consequently, it is claimed that Islam in China is distinctive because it is Islam with Chinese characteristics.

This is a study of the issue of the Confucianization of Islam in China from the perspective of contextualization. Liu Zhi (c. 1662 – c.1730) is one of the most well known Hui Islamic scholars. Both his acclaimed trilogy and his short treatises, including a Sufi poem, are examined by using two foundational themes, namely the concept of unity of existence and Sufi spirituality. Firstly, this study shows that Liu Zhi's concept of unity of existence is based on the Ibn 'Arabi tradition which has been influential in Chinese Sufism. Liu Zhi translated Persian and Arabic Islamic texts and interpreted the concept of unity of existence by primarily using Confucian terms with the aim to make difficult Islamic concepts more comprehensible to his readers.

Secondly, this study shows that Liu Zhi's Sufi spirituality is in active conversation with the Chinese cultural contexts. Sufi spirituality is contextualized primarily, but not exclusively, as Confucian self-cultivation. The Sufi path is also interpreted as a Buddhist concept of 'vehicle' (乘). The goal of Sufi spirituality is the return to the Real by the empowering role of the prophet Muhammad who is contextualized as the Utmost Sage.

Finally, contrary to the common understanding that Liu Zhi has Confucianized Islam, this study shows that Liu Zhi contextualized his Islamic tradition by using a composite translation-conversation model of contextualization. He was always faithful to his Islamic tradition and contextualized the Sufi spirituality as practical wisdom.

Acknowledgements

The writing of this doctoral thesis has been a fairly long process. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor Peter Riddell for his patience and encouragement throughout. His guidance and advice during the course of my studies in London and Hong Kong have been tremendous. His perceptive criticisms are always made with sensitivity and kindness. Without his patience, I would not have been able to finish the thesis.

My study would not be possible without the support and prayers of the pastors and leaders of my home church, the Chinese Church in London. I am thankful for their prayer and support.

I am thankful to the board members of Evangel Seminary in Hong Kong to grant me a sabbatical leave to finish my thesis. Also, the faculty members, staff and pupils have prayed continually for the completion of my research.

I am also thankful to family members who have waited long enough to see the completion of my study. Words cannot express my appreciation of their support.

Finally, I am greatly grateful to my wife, Jessie and our son Cliff. Their love and support have made the completion of the thesis less difficult than expected.

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1.0 Chapter One: Methodological Introduction

1.1 General Aims

Liu Zhi (c.1662 – c.1730) is known as one of the greatest Muslim scholars to have lived in China and his teachings on Islam are still influential among Muslim people today.¹ The Qing dynasty in China with its dictatorial emperors in the 17th and 18th century allowed limited religious freedom to Muslims in China. Local rioting was not uncommon in the fight for religious autonomy. In such a historical context, Liu met his challenges by translating the Qur’anic materials, classical Persian and Arabic texts in medieval Islam into Chinese and simultaneously re-interpreting the source materials using Confucian language and religious concepts, making Islam more comprehensible and less threatening for the Chinese authorities; thus allowing greater freedom for Islamic teaching. Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers have exerted great influence in Chinese Sufism. Ibn ‘Arabi (1165-1240) was born in Murcia,² Al-Andalus and his writings had an immense impact throughout the Islamic world and beyond. Liu Zhi’s translation of the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition was far from literal. Liu Zhi was both a neo-Confucian and Islamic scholar, well trained in both traditions. In order to reach out to more Muslims who could not read any Qur’anic or Islamic text in Arabic or Persian, he insisted that the Chinese language should be used to propagate the Islamic faith. A general aim of this study is to analyze Liu Zhi’s contextualization of Islam using Confucian concepts.

The general research questions of this study are: firstly, while Liu Zhi attempts to reach out to a majority of the Muslim people using Confucianism, what is his model of contextualization? How is he affected by the cultural, political, religious and philosophical contexts? Secondly, Liu Zhi adheres to the rich resources of traditional materials. Are there

¹ Sun Zhenyu is the only scholar who attempts to date the time of Liu Zhi. He suggests the year of birth around 1662. Z. Sun, *A Critical Biography of Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi* (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2006) 211. No scholar is able to date precisely the year of Liu Zhi’s death. Many Chinese scholars simply speculate around the year of 1730. Liu Zhi’s last work is dated around 1724.

² S. Hirtenstein gives an account of the spiritual life and thought of Ibn ‘Arabi. S. Hirtenstein, *The Unlimited Mercifer* (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 1999).

any successes and dangers in his use and interpretation of sources and traditions? Critical analysis needs to be made and evaluation is required. Thirdly, the question of getting Islam to be acceptable means that Liu Zhi has to integrate doctrine, religious spirituality and culture. What sort of integration? Is it adaptation, accommodation or Confucianization? These issues will be revisited in the final concluding chapter of this work.

1.2 Specific Objectives

Liu Zhi transmitted the ancient texts in Arabic and Persian into Chinese, a language that was inaccessible to most Chinese Muslims. The first objective of this study is to examine the major and minor works of Liu Zhi including his translation work.

Liu encouraged Muslims to pursue personal virtue in a form of Islamic spirituality known as Sufism or mysticism. Is Sufism mystical rather than spiritual? A. Johns argues that there is no need to equate spirituality with mysticism. Undoubtedly, mysticism has many negative connotations and may give a misleading impression to many.³ The mystics had great passion in their quest for spiritual rigours. For Liu Zhi, such pursuit of closeness with God was grounded on the concept of the unity of existence of God. The second specific aim is to examine critically Liu Zhi's contextualization of Sufi spirituality by using a Confucian concept of self-realization.

It should be noted that the two specific objectives are inter-related. Liu Zhi's translation makes extensive use of Confucian terms and his teaching of Islamic spirituality is articulated using the Confucian wisdom of self-realization. Liu Zhi's goal is to persuade Muslims in China that Islam is a living faith. For a living faith to grow, develop and persevere, people of faith must understand the divine revelation through the ancient text and the tradition. This is the primary task of Liu Zhi as the transmitter of tradition. Then, the people of faith must draw close to God by embodying the practical wisdom inspired by

³ A. H. Johns, 'Perspectives of Islamic Spirituality in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Encounters,' *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 12 (2001) 9.

the written text. Sufi spirituality provided the way for practical wisdom in 17th-18th century China. This is the secondary task of Liu Zhi and other similar transmitters to explain how doctrines would be expressed in Islamic spirituality.

1.3 Previous Relevant Studies

Many contemporary scholars, especially those in China, agree that Liu's Islamic works have made a valuable contribution to Chinese philosophy, especially the later Confucian, namely Neo-Confucian, tradition. Through Liu Zhi and other Islamic activities, the Chinese philosophical and cultural tradition has been enriched to become a diverse, multi-ethnic Chinese philosophy, integrating Islamic thought in Chinese into Neo-Confucian culture. Against this common consensus, there are recent and differing voices that should be taken seriously. A Malaysian Chinese, Zheng Wenquan has disagreed in his dissertation with the concept of the so called 'sinicized Islam' in China.⁴ Furthermore, he asserts that 17th-century Chinese Islam belonged to Ibn 'Arabi's Sufism which had existed in China, i.e. Sufism *in* China (emphasis on the word 'in') rather than *sinicized* Islam in China (emphasis on the word 'sinicized').

Sachiko Murata gives a modern English translation of Jami's *Lawa'ih* and argues that while Liu's translation of *Lawa'ih* was far from literal, Liu Zhi did not overtly betray its Islamic origin.⁵ Later, Murata further published a very significant and substantial treatment of Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam*.⁶ Her recent works continue and build on her previous scholarship on Liu Zhi. However, this present research study examines another important work of Liu Zhi, namely *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, which has been acknowledged as one of the most contextualized or Confucianized works of Liu Zhi. While *The Nature and Principle in Islam* is concerned with the nature of God, cosmogony, humanity and

⁴ Zheng Wenquan, 'A Study on the Islamic Nature of Liu Zhi's Philosophy' (MA thesis, Taoyuan: National Central University in Taiwan, 1998).

⁵ Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000) 121.

⁶ Sachiko Murata, William Chittick and Weiming Tu, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Islamic philosophy, *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* concerns the way of life for Muslims living in China.

Two scholars have written substantial studies on *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Liang Xiangming writes in Chinese and James Frankel in English.⁷ They have offered their own accounts of Liu Zhi's contextualization. This present study will determine a model of Liu Zhi's contextualization that is more convincing than the two accounts offered by Liang and Frankel.

1.4 Method of Study: Engaging Islamic Texts with Chinese Culture

1.4.1 Contextualizing the Religious Message

As a religion, Islam has a religious message and theology to communicate. The Islamic message needs to be contextualized in China. What is contextual theology? In a general sense, theologians realize that all theology is contextual. A classic example is the emerging Christian liberation theology in Africa in the 1960s. Theologians in post colonial Africa and Latin America have usually focused their study on justice-seeking theologies which express very clearly their political, cultural and social stances. Thus, 'theologians have always been influenced by their context and to varying degrees some have demonstrated an awareness of the influence that their own specific context and experiences have had on the theologies they develop.'⁸ In a specific sense, contextual theology means more than merely 'all theology is contextual'.⁹ Angie Pears asserts that theology is contextual when a theologian 'explicitly places the recognition of the contextual nature of theology at the

⁷ Liang Xiangming, *A Study of Liu Zhi and His Islamic Thought* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University Press, 2004). James D. Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name: Liu Zhi's Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law* (Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 2011).

⁸ Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2009) 9.

⁹ Several authors understand contextual theology not merely as methodology but as a distinct theology, contemporary and effective in its own right. Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (New York: Orbis Books, 1985); Stephen Pattison, 'Some Straw for the Bricks: a Basic Introduction to Theological Reflection' in J. Woodward and S. Pattison (eds.), *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000). Sigurd Bergmann, *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

forefront of the theological process.’¹⁰ That is, theology is contextual when it ‘is explicitly shaped, if not driven, by the recognition of the contextual nature of theology with all of its potentially controversial and problematic implications.’¹¹

This present study aims to show that Liu Zhi’s contextualization of Islam in China is not merely contextual in the general sense. He consciously and explicitly shaped his works by using Chinese philosophical and cultural concepts. He was aware of potential controversial and problematic implications. However, such contextualization was common among Hui literati in the early Qing dynasty. Practitioners include Wang Daiyu (c. 1580 - c.1660), Ma Zhu (c. 1640 – c. 1711) and others in 16th – 18th century China. When they engaged with Islamic texts in Persian and Arabic, they needed to translate and equally important to interpret the texts.

1.4.2 Engaging with Islamic Texts: Exoteric and Esoteric Interpretation of Islamic Text

According to A. Knysh, philologists face a difficult task in translating Qur’anic technical words and philosophical concepts. Part of the reason is the notion that the Arabic language is the repository of God’s final revelation and this makes the interpretation of that revealed text highly sensitive and contested. In their philosophical reconstruction, Ibn ‘Arabi often used Qur’anic verses to support their concept of the unity of existence. That is, the Qur’an is the foundational source of their understanding of the unity of existence. However, verses taken out of their context may yield themselves to widely different or even diametrically opposed interpretations.¹² A well-known Islamic theologian and philosopher al-Ghazali (1057-1111) argued that interpretation created new meaning.

¹⁰ Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology*, 1.

¹¹ Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology*, 1.

¹² Intra-Islamic debate is not uncommon in the history of Islam. See Alexander Knysh, ‘Multiple Areas of Influence’ in Jane D. McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur’an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 219.

Martin Whittingham, in his study of al-Ghazali's hermeneutics, observes that on the one hand, al-Ghazali affirmed the idea of an authoritative text and authorial intention. On the other, he 'could be said [to be] a prime example of an interpreter producing meaning.'¹³ Whittingham argues that it is not the context and preconditioning that al-Ghazali identifies; rather it is al-Ghazali's preconceived worldview which uncovers meanings in the Qur'an. It is the interdependence of the visible and invisible realms of the cosmos and this leads to his affirmation that 'both exoteric and esoteric interpretations are necessary and that esoteric interpretations supplement and build on exoteric exegesis, rather than replacing it.'¹⁴ He did not favour one above the other. Rather, he insisted on the connection between the two meanings, that is, between the pearl and the shell. In addition, al-Ghazali gave two sets of rules for the understanding of the meaning of the revealed text, namely, external and internal rules. External rules are concerned with the physical condition of the reader and the internal rules the mental condition of the reader.¹⁵ Furthermore, according to Muhammad Kamal, al-Ghazali notes that the degrees of textual interpretation are parallel to five degrees of existence.

1. Essential existence, as the highest degree of existence, corresponds to the entities beyond the domain of sensory experience and human understanding.
2. Sensory existence, which includes all sorts of images produced by the mind while dreaming or daydreaming.
3. Imaginative existence, which is the image of an object when it is absent from the senses or when it is not perceived directly by sense experience.
4. Mental or intellectual existence, which is able to represent the essence of an object.
5. Analogical existence, which is something that does not exist in the senses, imagination or intellect but exists as a property or attribute of something, such as mercy or anger, which are used in relation to God.¹⁶

¹³ Martin Whittingham, *Al-Ghazali and the Qur'an: One Book, Many Meanings* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) 129.

¹⁴ Whittingham, *Al-Ghazali*, 64.

¹⁵ Muhammad Kamal, 'Al-Ghazali's Hermeneutics and Phenomenology,' *Religion East & West* 4 (2004) 83-85.

¹⁶ Kamal, 'Al-Ghazali's Hermeneutics', 86-87.

Kamal concludes by stating two contributions of al-Ghazali's hermeneutics. Firstly, the priority of tradition or certain schools of thought to get access to the essence of the Qur'an is rejected. The reader needs to have a presuppositionless mindset before reading the revealed text. Secondly, the readers are encouraged to apprehend the meaning of the Qur'an on their own and arrive at an independent understanding.¹⁷ According to A. Knysh, al-Ghazali's method is classified as a moderate or *shari'a*-oriented approach to Qur'anic exegesis.¹⁸ For Knysh, 'al-Ghazali is convinced that the depth of one's understanding of the Qur'an is directly linked to one's level of spiritual purity, righteousness and intellectual progress.'¹⁹ It should be noted that al-Ghazali was the teacher of Ibn 'Arabi when he was in Baghdad.

Ibn 'Arabi's exegetical skill can be shown in his comment on Sura 42:11: 'there is nothing like unto Him.' This verse is often understood as underscoring God's transcendence and being the fact that He is beyond any comparison with the world. However, Ibn 'Arabi noted that there were two 'likening' words in Sura 42:11. 'It literally says: "There is nothing like (*ka*) His likeness (*mithlihi*)."' The expression thus actually affirms God's likeness, but denies that that likeness is any way commensurable with anything else.'²⁰ For Ibn 'Arabi, God's likeness referred to the perfect man in Sufi cosmology.²¹ Toby Mayer asserts that according to Ibn 'Arabi, 'the revealed scripture ... must be respected as a text, not used as a *pretext*. Correspondingly, Ibn 'Arabi's intensely esoteric hermeneutic of the Qur'an is often strictly in line with the literal sense of the text.'²² Thus, the key feature of Ibn 'Arabi's hermeneutic may be called 'esoteric literalism'. However, in the view of Knysh, Ibn 'Arabi's exegesis aimed to bring out the spiritual quintessence. When he expounded Sura 24:35, there were three levels of understanding of its meaning: 'the metaphysical and

¹⁷ Kamal, 'Al-Ghazali's Hermeneutics', 88.

¹⁸ Alexander Knysh, 'Sufism and the Qur'an' in Jane D. McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Qur'an Vol. V* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) 137-159, citing 143.

¹⁹ Knysh, 'Sufism and the Qur'an,' 151.

²⁰ Toby Mayer, 'Theology and Sufism' in Tim Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 282-83.

²¹ See Michel Chodkiewicz, Liadain Sherrard (tr.), *Seal of the Saints - Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi* (Cambridge: the Islamic Text Society, 1993) 60-73 for details.

²² Mayer, 'Theology and Sufism,' 282.

cosmological, the analogical (built around the implicit correspondences between the universe and the human individual) and the existential-experiential based on the notion'²³ of unity of God, humankind and the universe.

It is clear that both al-Ghazali and Ibn 'Arabi emphasized both exoteric and esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an and did not play esoteric interpretation against exoteric, always seeking the unveiling of the text with orthodoxy and orthopraxis. They could both be considered "moderate" Sufis because their exegesis was not characterized by a visionary and ecstatic approach to Qur'an interpretation. As asserted by W. Chittick, Sufis 'stress inwardness over outwardness, contemplation over action, development over legalism, and cultivation of the soul over social interaction.'²⁴

Liu Zhi did not belong to any Chinese Sufi sect. However, Sufi thought influenced Liu Zhi and he took seriously both exoteric and esoteric meanings of Islamic texts. He paid careful attention to the full range of meanings of the sacred texts. In his translation of text and conversation with the Chinese culture, he might create or expand new meaning with the goal to make these Islamic texts in Chinese comprehensible to the Muslim and non-Muslim readers. Not only did Liu Zhi interpret the text, he also interpreted his Neo-Confucian culture.

1.4.3 Engaging with Chinese Culture: Interpreting and Conversing with the Neo-Confucian Culture

Liu Zhi translated and interpreted the Islamic texts using Confucian terms. Also, he engaged with the Neo-Confucian context. His contextualization moved from text to context. However, it is debatable whether Neo-Confucianism is theistic. Does Neo-Confucianism provide a theistic worldview and monistic lexicon for Liu Zhi to translate the Islamic texts into Chinese?

²³ Knysh, 'Sufism and the Qur'an,' 155.

²⁴ William Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000) 19.

Julia Ching, a Neo-Confucian scholar, gives an affirmative answer. Firstly, the debate whether Neo-Confucianism is theistic or not is ongoing.²⁵ However, the more important point is that the philosophical system of Neo-Confucianism is religious or religio-cultural enough to enable Liu Zhi to carry out his program of contextualization. In her study of Zhu Xi (1130 - 1200), who developed Confucianism into Neo-Confucianism in 12th-century China, Ching avoids the excessive use of terms like monist and dualist while admitting that Zhu Xi's concept of *li* (principle) and *qi* (vital energy) seems to suggest dualism. Ching asserts that the concept of Great Ultimate with many manifestations can exclude Neo-Confucianism from strict dualism. For Ching, Zhu Xi's system of thought was architectonic. That is, it contains many parts that are held together by certain main concepts. Ching believes that in Chinese thought, the question of whether Zhu Xi is a theist or atheist is not important. Rather, 'the quest for an ultimate or absolute remains the strong motivation for his religio-philosophical pursuit.'²⁶ It is to be shown that Liu Zhi contextualized Zhu Xi's Great Ultimate of Neo-Confucianism as the Real Ruler of Islam.

Secondly, Neo-Confucian thought began in 11th-century China, peaked in the 13th-century and began to decline in 16th-century. By the time of Liu Zhi, Neo-Confucianism had a long and flourishing tradition. At the same time, it was highly diverse and dynamic. Liu Zhi could selectively use Confucian terms to interpret the religious message of Islam.

Thirdly, at the time of Liu Zhi, there were not many Chinese translated Islamic works. Murata notes that the Islamic languages have numerous theological and philosophical terms that 'translating these called for a good knowledge not only of Islamic thought but also of

²⁵ Fung Yulan argued that Confucianism could not be considered as a religion within the traditional understanding of the word religion. See Fung Yulan, *Short History of Chinese History* (Tianjin: Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2007) 4. Huston Smith argues that from a broader perspective, the distinctive character of Chinese religion is its social emphasis. Leaning on Paul Tillich's definition of religion as ultimate concern, Smith then justifies that Confucianism is theistic because it is 'social as it is religious. Huston Smith, 'Chinese Religion in World Perspective,' *Dialogue & Alliance* 4.2 (1990) 6. The contemporary Neo-Confucian scholar Tu Weiming also argues that Neo-Confucianism is theistic.

²⁶ Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) viii.

the Chinese intellectual tradition.’²⁷ This academic capability almost perfectly fits the credentials of Liu Zhi. He did not make a literal translation of the Islamic texts. Rather, he made use of the opportunity to define, delineate and invest intensively Islamic terms with Neo-Confucian meanings.

1.5 Models of Contextualization

D. Hesselgrave simply defines contextualization as ‘the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation ... and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts.’²⁸ Stephen Bevans prefers the term contextualization to inculturation or indigenization because it emphasizes the need ‘to interact and dialogue not only with traditional cultural values, but with social change, new ethnic identities and the conflicts that are present as the contemporary phenomenon of globalization encounters the various peoples of the world.’²⁹ This present study of the concept of Liu Zhi’s contextualization owes much to Bevans’s works. Bevans’s published work *Models of Contextual Theology* has been so popular that his book has been the standard textbook of contextualization in the Roman Catholic tradition. More importantly, Matteo Ricci (1552 - 1610) and other Jesuits had a successful period of Christian mission in 17th and 18th-century China. Thus, such a method of contextualization as developed in China during that period can offer an insight into Liu Zhi’s works. Bevans delineates six models of contextual theology. They are the translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic (or conversation), transcendent and countercultural models. Bevans asserts that ‘models are *constructions*, either theoretical positions without any concrete expression or abstraction from actual concrete positions ... The process of contextualization is a complex one, and must take into account all four factors of Scripture, tradition, culture and social change.’³⁰ Bevans’s model of

²⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 19.

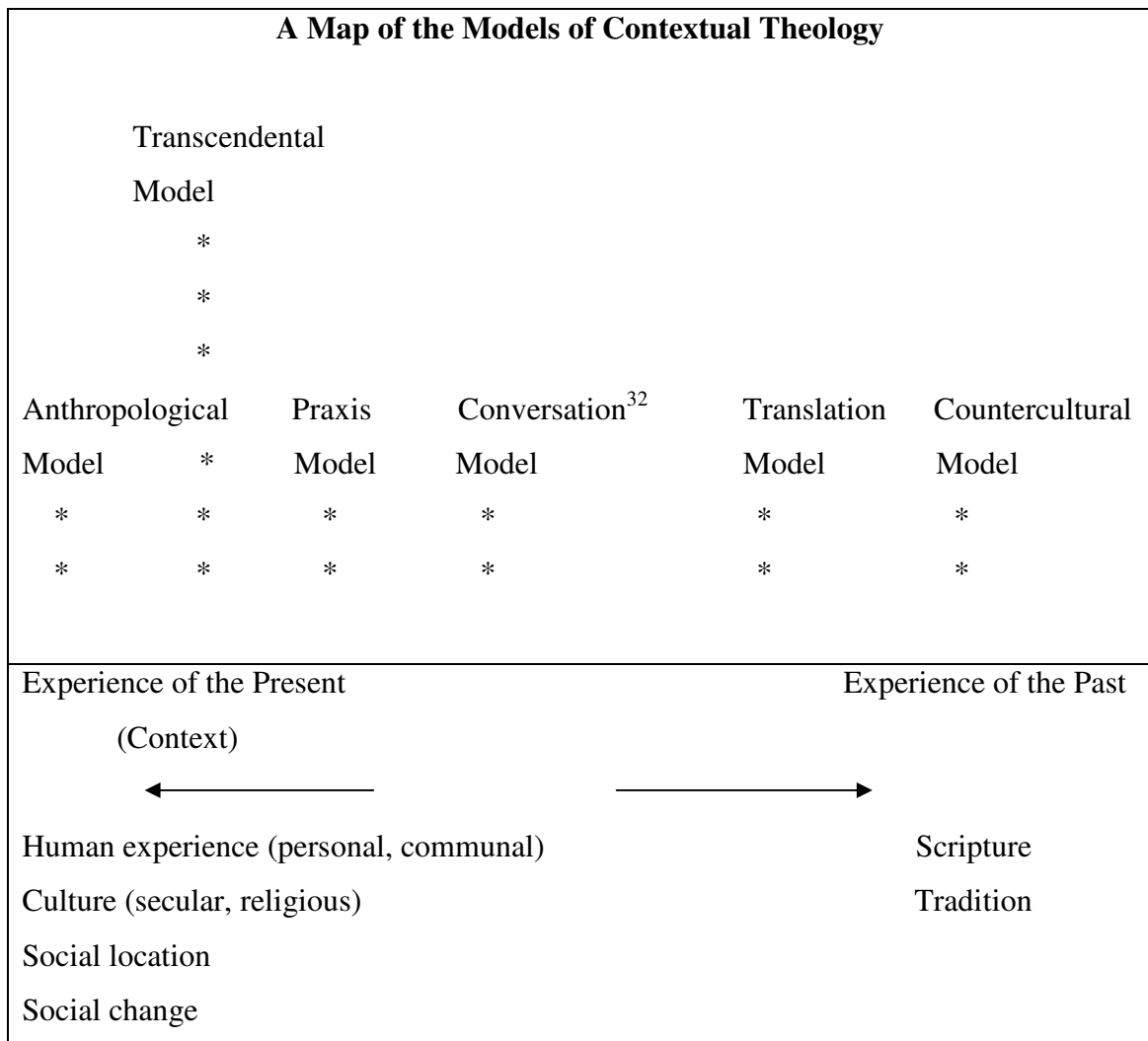
²⁸ David Hesselgrave and E. Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods and Models* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989) 200.

²⁹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Rev. and Expanded Ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 2002) 27.

³⁰ Stephen Bevans, ‘Models of Contextual Theology,’ *Missiology: An International Review* 8.2 (1985) 187.

contextualization is not rigid. It is a tool of theological reflection and analysis. Each of his six models has different emphases. Bevans also says that since the process of contextualization is a complex one, it is common for a combination of models to be operative in such a process.

Bevans provides a diagram of his models as follows³¹:



³¹ Bevans, *Models*, 32.

³² Bevans uses 'synthetic' but this study prefers conversation or dialogical model.

On the right side of the diagram is the countercultural model which emphasizes the experience of the past. However, it takes seriously the present local culture. It is not anticultural. It emphasizes true encounter and engagement with the context through respectful yet critical analysis. For any imported religion to take root within a people's context, the workers of that faith feel the need to challenge that context. Bevans says that the fundamental tenet of faith 'is used as a lens through which to interpret, engage, unmask, and challenge the experience of the present, the context of the individual and social experience, secular and/or religious culture, social location, and social change.'³³ Generally speaking, this model is often associated with religious exclusivism.

On the left side of the diagram above, the transcendental, praxis and anthropological models do not emphasize tradition or scripture in the past. Rather, these models emphasize the present context or the subjective experience.

The transcendental method was pioneered by Immanuel Kant who emphasized that religion was a reality beyond the realm of human knowledge. The transcendental approach asserts that the process of coming to know reality is the present authentic experience of the subject. Bevans explains that this model works 'through a model of both sympathy and antipathy — sympathy in that a person of integrity might learn much from another person of integrity from another context; antipathy in that if a person analyses why he or she is repulsed by or not attracted to a particular way of doing theology, he or she has already taken a first step to doing contextual theology as such.'³⁴

The praxis model has been closely associated with many liberation theologians in Latin America in the past. The present experience and future possibilities are their paramount concern of this model. The inspiration is neither from classic texts nor classic behaviour. The model does not follow the process of 'faith seeking understanding'. Rather, it is a process of 'faith seeking intelligent action.' Bevans explicates that by 'first acting and then

³³ Bevans, *Models*, 123-24.

³⁴ Bevans, *Models*, 106.

reflecting on that action in faith, practitioners of the praxis model believe that one can develop a theology that is truly relevant to a particular context.’³⁵

The anthropological model emphasizes the good, holy and valuable human context. Even divine revelation is embedded and conditioned at all times by the various cultures. The practitioner of this model ‘looks for God’s revelation and self-manifestation as it is hidden within the values, relational patterns, and concerns of a context.’ Generally speaking, this model is often associated with religious pluralism.

The above four models do not fit into Liu Zhi’s model of contextualization. His method is neither outright exclusivism nor pluralism. A more detailed discussion is provided on two more models, namely, translation and conversation.

The translation model is a conservative approach: the basic tenets of a belief system are understood as an unchanging message which is supracultural. Bevans stresses that translation incorporates not only form but also meaning. Thus, the meaning of the basic tenet of belief is translated into culturally appropriate terms.³⁶ While culture is important, culture is subordinate to the basic tenet of the belief system. In this model, the basic tenet is clearly prioritized over culture. Bevans emphasizes the basic and undifferentiated message of the belief system that is sought to be translated and thus it is a reduced minimal message. It is short and cannot be questioned. During the process of translation, culture is encountered. However, its role is neutral and not valued for its difference or uniqueness.³⁷

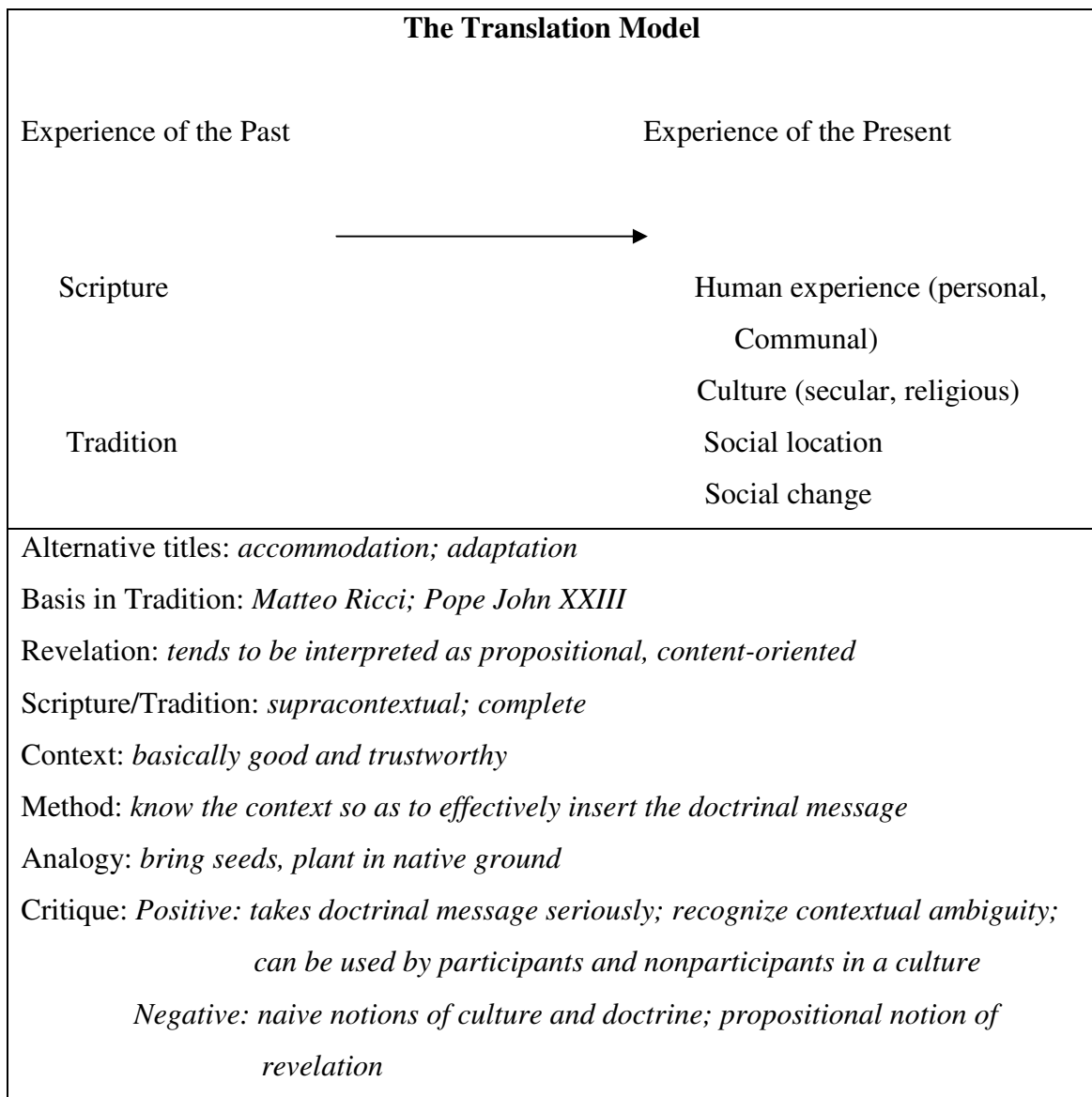
The following diagram summarizes the major contents of the translation model.³⁸

³⁵ Bevans, *Models*, 74.

³⁶ Bevans, *Models*, 37-38.

³⁷ Bevans, *Models*, 37-53.

³⁸ Bevans, *Models*, 42, 44.



Bevans describes the conversation approach as a middle-of-the-road model.³⁹ This model maintains the value of the translation approach in emphasizing the truth and unquestioned basic tenets of a belief system. Simultaneously, it values the significance of culture and the role culture may play during the process of contextualization. The practitioner of contextualization is always conscious of this model's dialogical nature and the changing

³⁹ Bevans, *Models*, 88.

nature of experience and culture. Thus, this model should be regarded as an ongoing theological movement. There are two closely related elements in the practice of this model. Firstly, a careful balance must be made between commitment to tradition, scripture and to the contemporary local context. Secondly, synthesis is the goal. It is developed between the practitioner's own cultural point of view and the points of view of others 'in the Hegelian sense of not just attempting to put things together in a kind of compromise but of developing, in a creative dialectic, something that is acceptable to all standpoints.'⁴⁰ Bevens also avers that the process is very complex and the practitioner may need to juggle several cultural values sensitively and smoothly. 'One needs, rather, to place emphasis on message at one point, while at another point one needs to emphasize cultural identity. At one point traditional practices might need to be cultivated. Perhaps in another set of circumstances they need to be resisted.'⁴¹ Thus, one always needs to keep in creative tension between the scripture, tradition in the past and the cultural and religious experience in the present. Bevens is fully aware of the built-in weakness of this model. The 'model is always in danger of "selling out" to the other culture, tradition, or social location ... the theologian must always be aware of the power and subtle manipulations of a dominant culture as well.'⁴²

The word 'conversation' is preferred to Bevens's use of 'synthesis'. It is a better word in the case of Liu Zhi's contextualization. While conversation emphasizes the broad basis and nature of dialogue, synthesis emphasizes more the resulting interaction between cultures. Moreover, the conversation model can easily accommodate more than two dialogical partners. Secondly, conversation is preferred because the encounter may be carried out in a formal or informal way. Synthesis or dialogue may seem too academic or formal for ordinary Muslims. Finally, conversation 'does not imply an equality of status of the participants that might be implied by "dialogue."' Mutual respect between conversation partners may be highly desirable, but a conversation may still take place where the balance

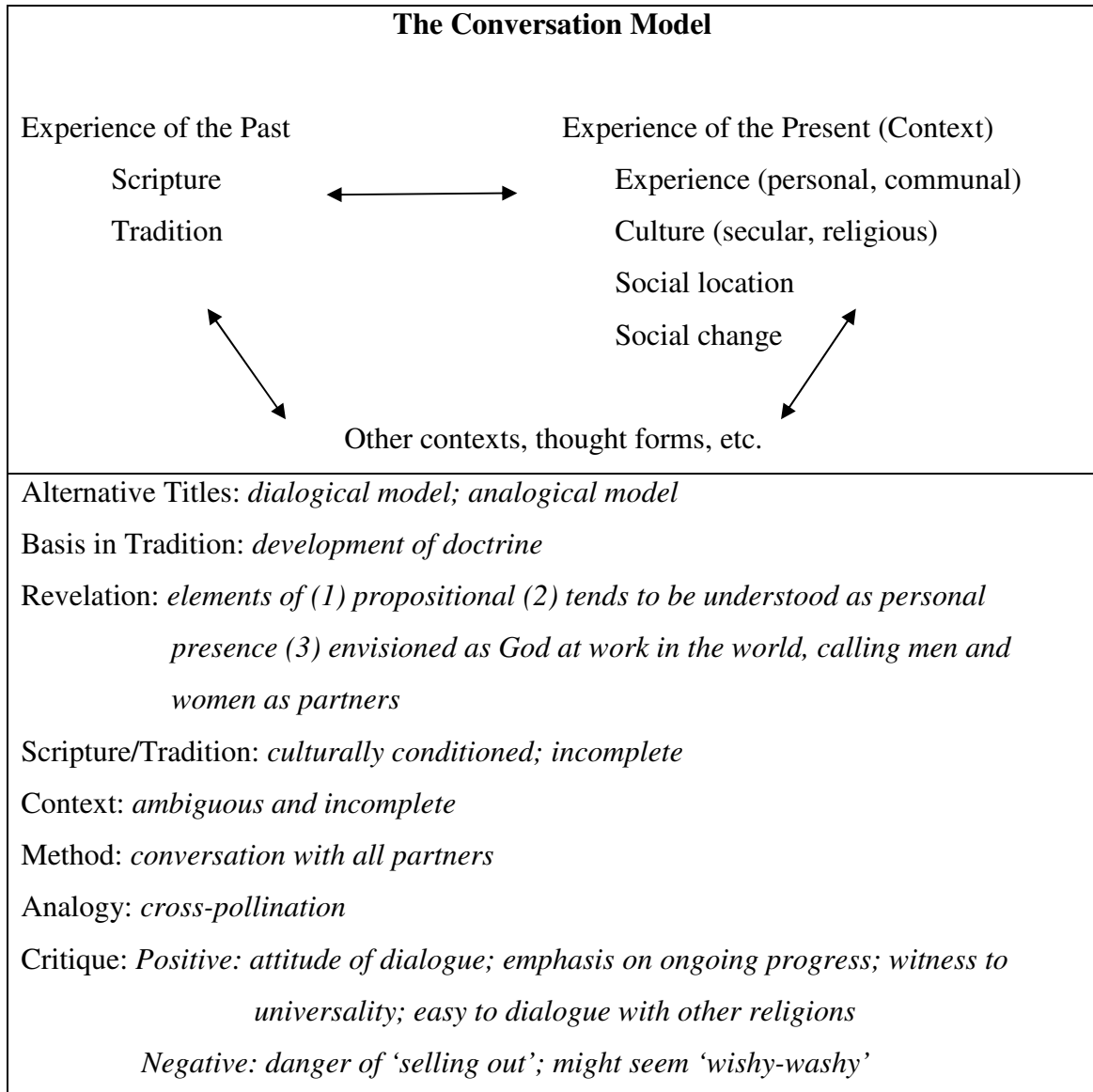
⁴⁰ Bevens, *Models*, 90.

⁴¹ Bevens, *Models*, 92.

⁴² Bevens, *Models*, 94.

of power is very much tilted toward one partner.’⁴³ In the context of Liu Zhi, he contextualized his Islam by extensive conversation with the all powerful Neo-Confucian culture which had the support of the imperial ruler.

The following diagram summarizes the major contents of the conversation model:⁴⁴



⁴³ Kirsteen Kim, ‘Missiology as Global Conversation of (Contextual) Theologies,’ *Mission Studies* 21.1 (2004) 49.

⁴⁴ This is a revised and composite diagram of two diagrams in Bevans, *Models*, 93, 95.

This study has found the works of Bevens helpful in formulating a model of Liu Zhi's contextualization for the following reasons. Firstly, part of his study involves cross-cultural contextualization in Asia, in particular his discussion of the conversation (or synthetic according to Bevens) model. Bevens uses Kosuke Koyama's contextualization in Asia to explain the details of the conversation model. Thus, it has regional relevance. Secondly, while Bevens writes from the Christian tradition, his model is valid for the contextualization of Islam cross-culturally also. Both religious traditions are monotheistic in nature and have their own sacred and authoritative scripture. Finally, there is no substantial examination of cross-cultural contextualization of Islam in China. The contextualization model of Bevens is a helpful idea to start with. Moreover, Bevens is well aware of the limitation of his model in studying contextual theology. He gives six models of contextualization. He asserts that his model is not fixed or beyond development or change. 'Though each model is distinct, each can be used in conjunction with others ... In the same way, it is my contention that no one model can be used exclusively and an exclusive use will distort the theological enterprise.'⁴⁵

There are possible pitfalls with both translation and conversation models. With regards to the translation model, the translators tend to emphasize the supracultural or supracontextual nature of the basic tenets of belief. They attempt to keep the basic doctrine and try to get rid of the cultural context. 'The problem, however, is to know the exact difference between the two.'⁴⁶ It is impossible to access the key doctrine without any human formulation. Another possible problem of the translation model is the over-emphasis of the inspired and revealed text, the Qur'an, at the expense of the Islamic tradition. The Qur'an is not merely a list of doctrines and propositions. Tradition plays an important and valid part in wrestling with faith and religious practice. With regard to the conversation model, Bevens asserts that proponents of this model may also encounter built-in dangers because the basic tenets of belief have the danger of being inculturated. 'Openness is a good thing, and it cannot be

⁴⁵ Bevens, *Models*, 32.

⁴⁶ Bevens, *Models*, 43.

discarded, but the theologians must always be aware of the power and subtle manipulations of a dominant culture as well.’⁴⁷

1.6 Original Contribution to Knowledge

Beginning from the late 17th century, the imperial rulers of China increasingly became less tolerant of Islam. Politically, Muslims had to struggle for survival under such a government. Religiously, they were not pietistic and had only a basic knowledge of Islam. Faced with the threat of acculturation and sinicization, Liu Zhi determined to confront the challenge of his times by translating and paraphrasing the ancient Persian and Arabic Islamic texts. His writings were to re-establish the Islamic tradition in Neo-Confucian contexts.

The original contributions of this study to the present knowledge of Liu Zhi and his works may be listed as follows:

- 1.0 This present study determines Liu Zhi’s method of contextualization of Islam. It is argued that his method is translation-conversation.
- 2.0 This study investigates Liu Zhi’s application of his contextualization method in his works. After examining some specific texts, the translation-conversation model gives a more convincing account of his contextualization than contemporary scholars have offered so far.
- 3.0 This is the first ever full English translation of Liu Zhi’s poem, *Five Sessions of the Moon* which is still commonly taught and memorized by many Hui Muslims.
- 4.0 This is the first ever full English translation of the first five chapters of Liu Zhi’s *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.
- 5.0 This is the first ever English translation of selected sections of Liu Zhi’s *The Explanation of the Five Endeavours*.

⁴⁷ Bevans, *Models*, 94.

6.0 A modern translation of selected sections of Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* is provided, taking more seriously into consideration Liu Zhi's Islamic background.

The study is important for the following reasons:

- 1.0 While Chinese scholars in China have published extensively on Liu Zhi's work in Chinese, they have not engaged with Western scholarships. So far, only a few English research essays have been translated into Chinese. Thus, this present study makes available Chinese language scholarship to an English readership.
- 2.0 The present study is the most extensive examination of Liu Zhi's works in English, examining his trilogy especially *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* in greater detail. It also captures present scholarly debate about the nature of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.
- 3.0 This study examines his long treatises as well as short Confucianized works, like *Three Character Classics* and philosophical works for teachers of Islam as well as popular works for the general public.
- 4.0 A critical assessment of both contemporary Western and Chinese key scholars of Liu Zhi is provided. This work chooses substantial published works by both Western and Chinese contemporary scholars and engages with them critically. Other minor works in academic journals are also consulted when appropriate.
- 5.0 This present study provides an up to date account of the state of research and scholarship on Liu Zhi by Chinese scholars who have written so far in Chinese only.

1.7 Summary of Each Chapter

The first chapter outlines the methodology and research questions of this study. Examination and discussion are primarily based on the major and some minor works of Liu Zhi. The aim of this research is to determine Liu Zhi's model of contextualization.

The second chapter provides a historical background of Islam in 17th-18th century China. This chapter discusses the historical, philosophical and Islamic contexts that Liu Zhi experienced. This is important background material to understand the works of Liu Zhi.

The third chapter gives a comprehensive survey and examination of Liu Zhi's writings, followed by a critical assessment of recent scholarly discussions of Liu Zhi's contextualization. This chapter gives a broad perspective of the overall writings of Liu Zhi.

The fourth chapter investigates the first aspect of Liu Zhi's contextualization, namely his engagement with the concept of unity of existence of the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. Two of Liu Zhi's works will be examined. Firstly, the relevant parts of his short and concise *Three Character Classic* will be translated into modern English. It demonstrates that Liu Zhi's Islam followed the concept of unity of existence in that the Real Ruler began the great transformation in the innate heaven and eventually in the acquired heaven. Muslims are encouraged to return to the Real Ruler by following the way of Islam. Liu Zhi's *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* is a paraphrased translation of Abd al-Rahman Jami's *Lawa'ih*. This demonstrates Liu Zhi's contextualized translation of Islamic text. He added explanation, re-interpreted and edited *Lawa'ih* freely using Neo-Confucian terms in order that his readers may understand the teaching of *Lawa'ih*.

The fifth chapter examines the second and more important aspect of Liu Zhi's contextualization, namely, his Sufi spirituality in conversation with the Neo-Confucian culture in China. Two of Liu Zhi's works will be translated. Firstly, his complete poem of *The Five Sessions of the Moon* will be translated into English for the first time. Examination of this poem demonstrates that Liu Zhi's Islam is influenced by the theoretical Sufi tradition in his times in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. Secondly, a relevant section of Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* is translated into English. This is a modern translation which improves on an old translation of a century ago. In this, on the one hand, Liu Zhi's Islam emphasized the concept of unity of existence. On the other hand, he emphasized that seekers on the way of return to the Real Ruler must follow the five endeavours of Islam. These endeavours are not interpreted legalistically. Rather, he

contextualized them by using Neo-Confucian wisdom which was understood as self-cultivation.

The sixth chapter gives a more specific perspective of Liu Zhi's works with the main focus on his interpretation and teachings of the rites of Islam. It provides for the first time an English translation of the first five chapters of Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. While his shorter *The Explanation of the Five Endeavours* gives only concise teaching of the rites of Islam, this longer work provides a more thorough and deeper discussion in terms of Neo-Confucianism. It is to demonstrate unmistakably that he used Neo-Confucian self-cultivation to explain the rites of Islam, in particular, the five pillars of Islam. The chapter will end by critically examining two recent scholars who have studied this particular work. The translation-conversation approach is argued to be a more convincing model than other options suggested by the two scholars.

The seventh and final chapter concludes with a discussion and summary of Liu Zhi's model of contextualization. It also provides a contemporary relevance of this study.

Chapter Two: The Historical, Philosophical and Islamic Context in China

Muslims in China were marginalized and often persecuted by the imperial Qing dynasty in 18th – 19th century China. However, they have survived and grown with little imperial or state support for the two last centuries. The most conservative estimates of numbers of Muslims in China vary from 18 to 23 millions⁵¹ and yet Islam in China has been considered to be at the periphery of the Islamic world. This chapter considers historical, philosophical and Islamic context at the time of Liu Zhi.⁵²

2.1 Historical Context

2.1.1 Islam in Pre-Modern and Modern China

There are Chinese sources that show both trading and diplomatic relations between China and Persia from 455 to 651 AD. Thus, there was communication between the Far and Near East prior to the founding of Islam.⁵³ Arab-Chinese contacts started around 651 AD.⁵⁴ Islam came to China not long after the death of the prophet Muhammad. Arabic sources strongly support the presence of Muslims in the province of Guangzhou, Southeast China in 916.⁵⁵ The evidence of the early spread of Islam was fragmentary but it seems clear that Middle Eastern and Central Asian Muslim traders introduced the new faith to the Chinese. The traders came through the well-known old Silk trade routes and also by sea routes via

⁵¹ It is very difficult to give an accurate number and the number of Muslims is increasing. E. Alles, 'Chinese Islam: Unity and Fragmentation,' *Religion, State and Society* vol. 31 no. 1 (2003) 7, 32. The ten Chinese Muslim ethnic nationalities are Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Bonan, Dongxiang, Tajik, Uzbek and Salar. The Hui comprise at least 9 million. Many western and Chinese studies mainly focus on the Hui and secondarily on the Uyghurs.

⁵² The Chinese name convention is surname first followed by other names. This rule applies throughout our study. Also, Liu Zhi has been known by other names. They are Liu Yizhai, Liu Jieliang, Liao Kai Lien and Liu Chih.

⁵³ Donald D. Leslie, *The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: the Case of Chinese Muslims* (Canberra: the Australian National University, 1998) 4. This work by Leslie is the most informed, supported by historical sources and yet suitable for general readership.

⁵⁴ Li, Xinghua 李興華, Huibin Qin 秦惠彬, Jinyuan Feng 馮今源 and Qiuzhen Sha, 沙秋真 (eds.) 合著, *中國伊斯蘭教史 History of Islam in China* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, 1998) 4.

⁵⁵ Leslie, *Integration of Religious Minorities*, 15.

the South China Sea. Through the Silk routes, the traders brought Islam to the Northwest region, i.e. Xinjiang province and then to other main trading cities, including the capital city. Later, northwest China was occupied by Muslims of Turkic descent, comprising mainly the Uyghurs. Through the sea routes via the Malacca strait, the traders brought Islam to Southeast China, first to various port cities and later gradually further inland. The main group of Muslims was known as the Hui from the Yuan dynasty onwards, occupying mainly the Northwest province of Gansu (east of Xinjiang) and the southwestern province of Yunnan.

The founding of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279 – 1368) ushered in a golden age for the growth of Islam in China. The emperors did not have the administrative and financial skills to rule the expanding territory. They did not rely upon the Han Chinese. The emperor Khulai Khan imported Muslims from various parts to help govern China. He gave them senior positions as the financial ministers of the government. As the Mongols continued to expand and invade, they turned to the Muslims to raise the required revenue. Eventually, mosques were built and Muslim communities with hospitals were established all over China. Muslims were speaking in Arabic and Persian. In the southwestern region and under the leadership of Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Din, a government minister, Muslims intermarried with natives and became the ancestors of the modern Muslim community of Yunnan.⁵⁶ They were allowed to recite the Qur’an, fast during Ramadan and circumcise male infants.⁵⁷ In 1345, a Muslim trader named Ibu Battutah visited a Southeast China seaport and recorded that Muslim musicians were able to perform songs in Arabic and Persian. Islamic representatives, *Shaykh* (Shaikh) and a *Qadi* (judge) were allowed to judge and rule the local administration with an indirect power over religion.⁵⁸ Yang Zhijiu’s 楊志玖 careful study is a detailed examination of the Hui’s contribution to the Yuan dynasty.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein, ‘Sayyid ‘Ajall Shams al-Din: a Muslim from Central Asia, Serving the Mongols in China and Bringing ‘Civilization’ to Yunnan’ (PhD thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1997).

⁵⁷ Ding Minjun 丁明俊, ‘Anatta – the King of Anxi Region in Yuan Dynasty. Conversion to Islam and His Influence,’ *Studies in World Religions* 43 (1991) 68-76.

⁵⁸ Berlie, *Islam in China*, 1.

⁵⁹ Zhijiu Yang 楊志玖, *元代回族史稿 A Study of the Hui Nationality in the Yuan Dynasty: Its Formation and Humanics* (Tianjin: Nankai University, 200).

Yang asserts that the Hui originated from diverse backgrounds in Central Asia speaking in Persian and Arabic. They were traders and travellers who immigrated into China long before the Yuan dynasty and settled down. By the time of the Yuan dynasty, Hui became an ethnic nationality in China, comprising only Muslims. For Yang, then, the Hui were not a homogeneous group but all were Muslims. Hui were distinguished from other Chinese Muslims by their competence in the Han Chinese language.⁶⁰ The Mongols exploited the Hui who assisted the Mongols to rule the empire.⁶¹ It is during the Yung dynasty (1271-1366) that foreign Muslims who had settled in China no longer considered themselves as overseas nationals. Sinicization officially began from this era.⁶² However, from the later Mongol rule about 1320, the Muslim position deteriorated as new laws cancelled the special privileges and tax exemptions of all religions including Islam. These anti-Muslim laws and subsequent popular sentiment against Muslims led to a reaction.⁶³ Mongols and also the Han Chinese disliked the food law of the Muslims.⁶⁴

After the fall of the Yuan dynasty, the native Ming dynasty (1369-1644) did not mistreat the Muslims but wanted Muslims to be acculturated. The founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, had three well known army generals who were Hui Muslims.⁶⁵ The Ming emperors recruited the Hui as envoys, translators and interpreters. Muslims were renowned as explorers, philosophers and military leaders. The well known Hui imperial fleet admiral was Zheng He.⁶⁶ Mosques were built with imperial approval. In general, Muslims sought peaceful co-existence with the ordinary Han Chinese people

⁶⁰ Morris Rossabi believes that the Hui are Chinese Han men who married with wealthy Muslim women and subsequently converted to Islam. Such a narrow view of Hui identity is not too uncommon in western historical accounts. Morris Rossabi, 'Islam in China,' in Mircea Eliade (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* Vol. 7 & 8 (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995) 382.

⁶¹ Yang, *Study of the Hui Nationality*, 59-72.

⁶² Leslie would not call these Muslims Chinese Muslims. He prefers the term 'Muslim settlers in China.' See Leslie, *Integration of Religious Minorities*, 19.

⁶³ Donald D. Leslie, 'Living with the Chinese: the Muslim Experience in China, T'ang to Ming,' in C. Le Blanc and S. Blader (eds.), *Chinese Ideas about Nature, Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1987) 182.

⁶⁴ Leslie, *Integration of Religious Minorities*, 23.

⁶⁵ Leslie, 'Living with the Chinese,' 185.

⁶⁶ Tan argues that Zheng's desire and mission was to propagate Islam. See Tan Tan, 'A New Exploration into the Motive of the Voyage to the South Asia and the East Africa Made by Zheng He,' *Studies of World's Religion* 101 (2005) 95-103.

during the Ming dynasty. Muslims were not aggressive in their religious duties and generally did not attempt to convert the Han Chinese. However, the number of Hui gradually dropped because fewer Arabs and Persians arrived by sea and more Turkic speaking Muslims arrived from Central Asia. These Uyghurs and similar ethnic groups began to form a larger percentage in the northwest of China. The Ming emperors gradually began to compel the Muslims to accept some Chinese ways. Muslims, especially the Hui, adopted Chinese dress and started to learn the Chinese language. They even had to assume Chinese names. However, these attempts had limited success because Muslims united themselves behind local leaders and the mosque served to reinforce a separate identity. In the late Ming dynasty, some Hui *ulama* became both Islamic and Confucian scholars or literati. They began to transmit, paraphrase and interpret Persian and Arabic Islamic texts using the terminology and vocabulary of traditional neo-Confucian thought. Donald Leslie argues that it 'is only with the Ming (1369-1644) that we can talk confidently of integration into Chinese society and use the term "Chinese Muslims" or "Muslim Chinese" rather than "Muslims in China".'⁶⁷ The late Ming and early Qing dynasty saw the first of several waves of Chinese Islamic scholars who propagated the Islamic texts translating them into meaningful religious spirituality for ordinary Muslims who could no longer read the ancient text in Arabic or Persian. As argued by Ben-Dor Benite, these Hui scholars 'were at once fully Muslim and fully Chinese ... That is to say, these individuals used textual production as a way to create for themselves a space that overlapped Chinese culture and Islamic tradition.'⁶⁸ Notably, the first mention of the Qur'an was about 1368.

The last imperial dynasty was ruled by the Manchus and was known as the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). By 1758, the Qing government also ruled the Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. The Manchus made policies that were difficult for the Muslims and compelled the Muslims to assimilate. The government sometimes imposed heavy taxes and other obligations on the Muslims and contravened the regulations of the court to impede the Muslims' practice of their religion. Starting from the late 18th and the

⁶⁷ Leslie, *Integration of Religious Minorities*, 27.

⁶⁸ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) 14.

19th century, the Muslims in both northwest and southwest China rebelled against the Qing government. However, the early Qing rulers were more tolerant. The 17th century Muslim scholars like Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi were able to anticipate the threat of the Qing emperors. They made use of Neo-Confucian thoughts in their Islamic teaching but later 18th century Chinese *ulama* were more radical. One such leader named Ma Mingxin (1718 – 1781) in Gansu, North China was hostile to Neo-Confucianism. He studied in the Middle East and returned to China to introduce the new teaching, advocating a different form of the Sufi teachings. Ma's view was to establish a Muslim state along China's borders. Ma led revolts against the imperial ruler in 1781 and was killed. Sporadic ongoing revolts continued into the next century. The most devastating rebellion erupted in Gansu in 1862. The leader was Ma Hualung and he also advocated the new and untainted pure teaching. The whole rebellion was defeated by the Qing army in 1877.⁶⁹ Another equally severe rebellion took place in southwest China, Yunnan province between 1855 and 1873. These revolts led to an erosion of trust in the Muslims among the Chinese public and the imperial Qing government.

Today, the largest Muslim ethnic group is the Hui, commonly found in Gansu and Yunnan provinces.⁷⁰ The second largest Muslim ethnic group is the Uyghurs in Xinjiang province. There are tensions due to conflict between Chinese cultural practices and Islamic ideals. The history of Muslims in China during the last two centuries from the beginning of the Qing dynasty has shown that there were various ways of dealing with the conflict. They ranged from integration with traditional Chinese society to isolation in the form of a return to an Arabicised pure Islam.⁷¹ After Tang Xiaoping's reforms in the 1990s, the government

⁶⁹ An excellent historical study for this period in northwest China based on various sources from Russian, Chinese and Western scholars has been done by H. Kim. His work is highly praised for his meticulous research on sources. Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China: the Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁷⁰ Compared to other Muslim nationalities in China, most Hui are closer to the Han Chinese in terms of demographic proximity and cultural accommodation. The Uyghurs are the least integrated Muslim minority. Uyghurs believe firmly that their ancestors were indigenous people in the Tarim Basin occupying most of the present province of Xinjiang. Another small ethnic group living in Xinjiang is the Tajiks whose language distantly relates to old Persian. See Dru C. Gladney, 'Islam in China: Accommodation or Separatism?' *China Quarterly* 174 (2003) 453-55.

⁷¹ Gladney, 'Accommodation or Separatism?' 466.

of the People Republic of China has taken positive steps to help the Muslims in China. Qur'ans have been printed, mosques rebuilt and monuments repaired and preserved. The government has avoided heightening the conflict and tried to work at reconciliation. Today, while most Hui are not highly conversant with the tenets of Islam, they still perceive themselves to be different from the Chinese Hans after centuries of living in China.⁷² They are not totally sinicized and readily identify themselves with the larger Islamic world community. Two scholars have demonstrated this unusual phenomenon. After extensive field research in the '80s and under the watchful eyes of the Chinese authority, Dru Gladney developed a more nuanced conclusion that while there is remarkable diversity among the Hui, they regard themselves as one family and one united nationality.⁷³ After examining a century (1850-1950) of Christian-Chinese Muslim interaction, Raphael Israeli concludes that not only Christian missionaries were aliens, the Chinese Muslims, too, felt alienated from the Chinese mainstream and at times even rebelled against it.⁷⁴ Needless to say, the Uyghur Muslims and other smaller Muslim ethnic nationalities in the Xinjiang province of Northwest China have found it difficult to identify themselves as Chinese Muslims since their native languages are not Chinese.

In the early 20th century, studies of Chinese Islam were carried out by western scholar missionaries with the aim of converting Chinese Muslims to Christianity. Marshall Broomhall carried out research among the Muslims in China in 1910.⁷⁵ Other studies by Rudolf Loewenthal⁷⁶ and Isaac Mason⁷⁷ were more interested in the sociological data on

⁷² A fairly accurate and concise account for general readership, supported by field-research, of contemporary Hui and Uyghurs in China is given by J. Berlie. Jean A. Berlie, *Islam in China: Hui and Uyghurs between Modernization and Sinicization* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co. Ltd, 2004).

⁷³ Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 325. This unity is particularly relevant in the modern context after Tang Xiaoping's economic reforms.

⁷⁴ Raphael Israeli, 'The Cross Battles the Crescent, One Century of Missionary Work among Chinese Muslims (1850-1950),' *Modern Asian Studies* 29.1 (1995) 217.

⁷⁵ Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem* (New York: Paragon Book Co., 1910).

⁷⁶ Rudolf Loewenthal, 'Russian Materials on Islam in China: A Preliminary Bibliography,' *Monumenta Serica* 16 (1957) 449-479; 'Sino-Islamica: Bibliographical Notes on the Chinese Muslims,' *Monumenta Serica* 22 (1963) 209-212.

⁷⁷ Isaac Mason, 'The Mohammedans of China: When, and How, They First Came,' *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 60 (1929) 1-54; Isaac Mason (trans.), *The Arabian Prophet: A Life*

Muslims in China. Very little work was done between 1949 and 1960 when China closed the door to any western interest in Chinese study. Scholarly studies on Islam in China resumed around 1970 and have been carried out by J. Lipman⁷⁸, F. Aubin⁷⁹, R. Israeli⁸⁰ and D. Leslie⁸¹, followed recently by D. Gladney.⁸² Scholarship from the Chinese, mostly Hui Muslims, began from the early 1990s; this has made rapid progress.⁸³ Chinese Islamic studies have covered a very broad area including sociological, theosophical, Sufi, political and historical themes. Substantial works on Liu and his contemporaries in both journals and book-length studies have been published during the last twenty years by Han and Hui scholars alike.

2.1.2 The Scripture Hall Education System

The early Muslims came from the West through the ancient Silk Road to Northwestern China and also by sea to the Eastern part of China as long ago as the time soon after the death of the prophet Muhammad.⁸⁴ In the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), the status of Muslims was elevated and this brought a new wave of immigrant Muslims into China.⁸⁵ While Muslims were scattered, there was in Nanjing (including the greater region Jiangnan) a more concentrated and localized Muslim group in the 17th century. Nanjing in the Ming dynasty was an important city, centrally located with fertile conditions for agriculture

of Mohammed from Chinese and Arabic Sources, a Chinese-Moslem Work by Liu Chia-lien (Shanghai: Commerical Press, 1921).

⁷⁸ Jonathan N. Lipman, 'The Border World of Gansu, 1895-1935' (PhD thesis, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987).

⁷⁹ F. Aubin, 'Chinese Islam: In Pursuit of Its Source,' *Central Asian Survey* 2 (1986) 73-80.

⁸⁰ Raphael Israeli, *Muslims in China* (London: Curzon & Humanities Press, 1978).

⁸¹ During this period, only two studies by western scholars focus on Liu and his contemporaries. One of them is a very scholarly historical study by Leslie and Wassel. See D. Leslie and M. Wassel, 'Arabic and Persian Sources used by Liu Chih,' *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982) 78-104; J.F. Ford, 'Some Chinese Muslims of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' *Asian Affairs* 61 (1974) 144-56.

⁸² Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁸³ The most well known and prolific Hui scholar is Jin Yijiu who has written many articles as early as the 1980s and a book-length study on Liu Zhi.

⁸⁴ The most authoritative history of the Hui is a two-volume edited work by Bai Shouyi. Bai Shouyi, *The History of Chinese Hui Ethnic Minority* (Beijing: Chung Hwa Book, 2003).

⁸⁵ Yang Zhijiu, *A Study of the Hui Nationality in the Yuen Dynasty: Its Formation and Humanics* 元代回族史稿 (Tianjin: University of Nankai Press, 2003) 143-287.

including silk cultivation. This was also the capital city of the Ming founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398). This brief historical context will not cover the major area in Northwestern China of Xinjiang province especially the Uyghur Muslims because of the nature of this study focusing on the Hui Muslims. The historical background will focus on the Hui Muslims near Nanjing and the Eastern more prosperous part of China. This school of Chinese Muslims is called the Nanjing school.⁸⁶ Under the Ming rule, the city of Nanjing and the region of Jiangnan became a principal centre for various religious institutions and philosophical traditions. However, in 1424, emperor Yongle (1403 – 1424) moved the capital to Beijing. By the 17th century, Nanjing remained prosperous. It was estimated that Muslims accounted for about one hundred thousand people. In addition, educated Hui Muslims were trained in both Chinese and Islamic philosophy.

The Scripture Hall Education System was the key institution that contributed to the growth of Muslim education in various subjects of Islamic knowledge. It was started by Hu Dengzhou (c. 1522 - c. 1597) in Shan Xi,⁸⁷ northern China as early as the mid-sixteenth century.⁸⁸ During the Ming dynasty, Shan Xi was a prosperous region and had fertile agricultural land. Muslims were farmers, tea growers and established their financial resources. Hu learnt Chinese when he was young. He was taught Islam by an overseas Arabic master when he was grown up. Hu was disappointed that few Islamic materials were available and Muslims did not understand Islamic works. Hu began teaching in his home and later set up teaching centres in the mosque. Pupils could learn for free or partially subsidized. This was the prototype of the later Scripture Hall Education System. The education was divided into primary, secondary and university level. Children studied in the primary level. Adults without education or beginning in Islam studied in the secondary level. University level was to train future Islamic teachers, namely *Ahong*.

⁸⁶ For a brief and concise summary of the history of the Nanjing school, see Mi Shoujiang and Ma Duoyong, 'The Islamic Jinling School and the Confucianism Civilization,' in Yang Huaizhong (ed.) *Dialogue between Civilizations* (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 2006) 268-275.

⁸⁷ Hu Dengzhou 胡登洲 in Shan Xi 陝西.

⁸⁸ Michael Dillon gives a comprehensive survey of Sufi orders and the Xi Dao Tang education system. See Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Richmond: Surrey, 1999) 91-152.

By the time of Liu Zhi, there were at least two school networks among the Scripture Hall Educational System. One school network was based around Shan Xi and the other in Shandong, Northeastern China. Owing to the fact that there were few standard textbooks, transmission of tradition was heavily dependent on the experience and charisma of each Islamic teacher (*Ahong*). It should be noted that Liu Zhi belonged to the Shan Xi School⁸⁹ and yet he made contact with the Shandong school.⁹⁰ This demonstrated the effort made by Muslim literati eager to establish networking between different places and school networks.

The key feature of 16th and 17th-century Chinese Islam was vigorous activity by the Hui Muslim literati producing scholarly Muslim literature in Chinese and in parallel with it an impressive development of the Scripture Hall Education System.⁹¹ The need of Islamic literature in Chinese and the Scripture Hall Education System was due to firstly a desire for a better understanding of Muslim faith and secondly for clearing any misunderstanding from the Hans and ruling Manchu imperial court, who were increasingly suspicious of Muslims' rites, with regard to their loyalty to the ruling imperial power. With such cultural and political pressure, the Hui Muslim literati stood up to the cultural and political challenge. They translated their received Islamic tradition into Chinese texts and encouraged further development of various networks of the scriptural hall educational system into the eastern part of prosperous China. Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi in the 17th-18th century China were Hui Muslim literati who were competent in both Neo-Confucianism and Arabic/Persian Islamic traditions in China. To understand the translated and edited Islamic works in Chinese was no easy task for the common Hui people, let alone to read the source materials in Arabic or Persian. For the sake of Muslim education, the task of translation was the necessary first step to facilitate the propagation of the Islamic faith. Hui Muslims in general needed to be taught. Translating the Islamic text and educating the ordinary Hui Muslims to understand the texts by the learned teachers or *Ahong* were two

⁸⁹ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 3.

⁹⁰ Sha, *Islam in China*, 62.

⁹¹ For a short history of the scripture hall educational system, see Li Xinghua, Qin Huibin, Feng Jinyuan, and Sha Quizhen, *History of Islam in China* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science Press, 1998) 415-454.

different tasks. Yet, they were to be done simultaneously in 17th-century Islamic scholars in China.

One should not think that the Hui Muslim literati could succeed in the task effortlessly. Firstly, traditionalists would always concern themselves with, and sometimes actively resist, translating sacred received Islamic traditions in Persian or Arabic into local languages. Secondly, compared to the majority Hans, most Hui were not good readers of written work in Chinese. The literary competences of Hui Muslims living in less developed areas like North and South-western China were even worse.⁹² Nevertheless, Muslim literati like Liu Zhi wrote, and edited scholarly Islamic works and translated them into Chinese. Liu also wrote Sufi poem and popular Islamic short tracts that could be rhymed for quick memorization even among children. It was and still is today common among Hui children that they can memorize Liu Zhi's poems and tracts even before they can understand the meaning of the poems and tracts. The rise of the education system in the mosque was a native development among the Chinese Muslims. The Chinese language has been the educational language in addition to being a social language.⁹³ Hui people could have the opportunity to learn Arabic or Persian should they desire to do so and be taught by the master, *Ahong*.

2.1.3 Islamic Text Transmission in Chinese

The translation of Arabic and Persian Islamic works into Chinese began in the 16th century and continued through to the 19th century. These few centuries of Islamic activities laid the philosophical and theological foundation of modern Chinese Islam. This foundational period may be further divided into two stages. The first stage is represented by Wang Daiyu (c. 1580 – c. 1660), Ma Zhu (c. 1640- c. 1711) and Liu Zhi in Nanjing and the second stage is led by Ma Dexin (1794-1874) and Ma Qixi (1857-1914) in Yunnan, in the southwestern

⁹² This might contribute partly to the fact that Uyghurs in Northwestern China are not much influenced by the 17th-century Islamic reform. For the Uyghurs, Han Chinese is not their native language.

⁹³ In addition to the social Han Chinese language, Hui have developed a modified Chinese scripture language that is primarily used within the education system in the mosque.

region of China. The first stage took place in Nanjiang city and the greater Jiangsu region. Islamic work in Chinese primarily focused on philosophy, religious rituals, creeds, Islamic histories, *Hadith* and Sufi materials. The second stage which took place mainly in Yunnan encompassed Islamic work in both Chinese and Arabic covering other areas, including linguistic usage, astronomy, geography and the Qur'an in Chinese.

(1) Wang Daiyu (c. 1580 – c. 1660)⁹⁴

Wang Daiyu claimed to have Arabic ancestry, whether in Central Asia or the Middle East was not certain.⁹⁵ His ancestors came to China to pay respect to the emperor and eventually settled down in Nanjing in the 14th century. During Wang Daiyu's time, *Ahong* might be trained to read Arabic and Persian and not necessarily Chinese. Wang Daiyu grew up under the mosque training educational system and learnt Arabic but hardly any Chinese. At the age of 20, he began to study Chinese. By the age of 30, he was reading Chinese history, philosophy and also Buddhist and Daoist books. He often used Islamic truth to criticize non-Islamic philosophies. He lived in Beijing in his later life. His three famous works have been recently collected and published together in one single volume.⁹⁶ The goal of Wang Daiyu was to use Neo-Confucianism to explicate and propagate the Islamic faith. He defended his approach by arguing that words and languages were merely earth and wood. These were part of the building materials to build the mosque. Thus, contemporary Chinese scholar Liu Yihong labels Wang Daiyu's methodology as 'using Neo-Confucianism to explain Islam.'⁹⁷

⁹⁴ The year is approximate and few scholars have argued for a definite year.

⁹⁵ A most recent thesis-length study of Wang Daiyu in English is Kristian Petersen, 'The Heart of the Islamic-Chinese Dialogue and the Creation of a Chinese Muslim Discourse' (MA thesis, University of Colorado, 2006).

⁹⁶ Wang Daiyu, *Collected Classical Writings of the Chinese Hui Nationality: True Explanation of the Right Religion. The Great Learning of the Pure and Real. Orthodox Answers of the Precious True* (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1988).

⁹⁷ Liu Yihong, *The Dialogue between Confucianism and Islam* (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2006) 115.

While Ma Zhu was born in Yunnan, he traveled widely in China because of political uprisings in Yunnan. He grew up in a poor family and was eager to learn and write. At the age of 20 he began to write. At 30 years of age he left for Beijing and his stay there was a turning point in his life. At 43 years of age, he left Beijing and travelled all over the country, networking with other Islamic scholars and teachers in various parts of China. Liu Zhi's father wrote a preface for his book.⁹⁸ He tried three times to submit his book to the imperial court and hoped to win imperial approval. His motive was to raise Islam to legitimate status. His book was popular and being read by more people than Wang Daiyu's works. Liu Yihong asserts that Ma Zhu's main goal was to illustrate that both Neo-Confucianism and Islam are mutually illuminating traditions.⁹⁹ While Liu Zhi spoke highly of Ma Zhu's writings, he did not adopt his methodology. Rather, he borrowed from Wang Daiyu and further developed his concept of divine Ruler.

One of the earliest Islamic texts in Chinese was written by Wang Daiyu.¹⁰⁰ The Muslim literati began to propagate the basic tenets of the Islamic faith by translating and commenting on Islamic texts in Chinese. These early Muslim writers sought to use Neo-Confucian, Daoist and even Buddhist ideas and terms in their writings. Wang Daiyu was one of the two Chinese Muslim writers who were prominent in the 17th-18th century, the other being Liu Zhi.

Wang Daiyu was the first well-known scholar who wrote important texts in Chinese on Islam using Confucian terms and concepts. Most of his Muslim contemporaries had only a scant knowledge of Islam. He argued that both Islam and Neo-Confucianism had similar views of personal virtue, brotherly love, social and filial relationships. He prepared to adopt the dualistic concept of *yin* and *yang* from Daoism. The five Confucian virtues of benevolence and wisdom were appropriated with the five cardinal responsibilities of a Muslim. However, he was critical that Neo-Confucianism was unwilling to accept monotheism. Undoubtedly, Wang did not disclaim Neo-Confucianism. Rather, he used it

⁹⁸ Ma Zhu, *The Compass of Islam* Reprint (Tianjin: Huizu Zhongguo Yisilanjiao, 1987).

⁹⁹ Liu Yihong, *Dialogue*, 117-121.

¹⁰⁰ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 5.

for the sake of clarifying and championing Islamic belief. In addition to those of Liu Zhi, the works of Wang have been studied enthusiastically in recent years by both contemporary Western and Chinese scholars.¹⁰¹

Wang Daiyu wrote three main works. The longer work is known as *The Real Commentary on the True Teaching* and two shorter treatises, *The True Answers of the Very Real* and *The Great Learning of the Pure and Real*.¹⁰² These works cover the essential teachings of the basic tenets of Islamic belief in terms of Neo-Confucianism and are intended for an elementary level of learning. In term of length and details, they are comparatively shorter than the works of Liu Zhi and more basic than Liu Zhi's work. *The True Answers of the Very Real* is written in a question and answer format. It is a collection of dialogues in which Wang answers questions put to him by a variety of enquirers. It also provides a quick and easy reference to basic teachings of Islam for beginners.

The Great Learning of the Pure and Real is the shortest of the three main works and explains the basic concepts of the Real One, Numerical One and the Embodied One.¹⁰³ The Real One is God in himself and the Numerical One is the first principle of creation. Murata asserts that 'Wang's discussion employs terminology drawn largely from Neo-Confucianism showing that he felt it to be the most adequate of the Chinese traditions to explain the nature of things.'¹⁰⁴ In Liu Zhi's influential work, *The Nature and Principle in Islam*, Liu Zhi continued what Wang had begun. Not only did he explain in greater details the beginning of the world by using Wang's terms of Real One, Numerical One and the Embodied One, he added diagrams to make clear what he wrote in the text. Liu Zhi's work

¹⁰¹ S. Murata has translated some of Wang's *Great Learning of the Pure and Real* into English. See S. Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000). Kristian Petersen, 'The Heart of the Islamic-Chinese Dialogue: Wang Daiyu and the Creation of a Chinese Muslim Discourse' (MA thesis: University of Colorado, 2006).

¹⁰² These three works are often combined together and published as one book. Wang Daiyu, 余振貴點校 Yu Zhengui (ed.), 正教真詮, 清真大學, 希真正答 (Ningxia, Ningxia People Publisher, 1988).

¹⁰³ Murata has translated the text and commented briefly on the Islamic concepts. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 69-79.

¹⁰⁴ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 72.

is longer, more comprehensive and intended not primarily for an elementary level of teaching and learning.

The Real Commentary on the True Teaching is divided into two parts. The first part begins with the explanation of the Real One, continues with the Utmost Sage and ends with the five endeavours. The second part begins with human relationships, continues with filial piety and ends with the afterworld. Thus, Wang firstly discussed the essential doctrines of Islamic beliefs and secondly he contextualized his teachings in a Neo-Confucian context. He explained what the ways of Muslim living should be in a Chinese society in terms of human relationship, diet, Islamic endeavours and so on for a Muslim living in a non-Muslim country. Liu Zhi again continued what Wang had begun. Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* followed a similar format to that of Wang's work. Again, *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is longer, more comprehensive and contextualized even more thoroughly with Neo-Confucian ethical teachings. The first five chapters follow similarly the content of part 1 of *The Real Commentary on the True Teaching*. The sixth to twentieth chapters cover similar content to Wang's part 2. Liu Zhi continued and further contextualized Wang's Islamic teaching into his Chinese contexts.

(2) Liu Zhi (c. 1662 - c. 1730)

Liu Zhi was a prolific writer and was able to leave a significant legacy for the later generations of Chinese Muslims. He pursued studies in Islam, Neo-Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Like Wang, he borrowed religious concepts from these ideologies and applied them to his Islamic writings. While he borrowed religious and philosophical terms available to him, his writings presented Islam as a unique religion and different from other ideologies. While he was interested in Sufism, his main views were in accordance with the *Hanafi* school of law within Sunni Islam.¹⁰⁵ After a careful analysis of the Arabic and Persian sources used by Liu Zhi, Donald D. Leslie and Mohamed Wassel give the

¹⁰⁵ J. F. Ford notes that while Liu was indebted to the *Hanafi* school, he also used at least four works which were definitely Sufi. See J.F. Ford, 'Some Chinese Muslims of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' *Asian Affairs* 61 (1974) 151.

following summarized comments. Firstly, two key Arabic texts, namely *Wiqaya* and *'Aqaid*, used by Liu Zhi are standard Sunni Hanafite texts of law and ritual, influential in the 19th and 20th centuries. Secondly, very few, if any, are *Shi'a*. Thirdly, most works, especially those in Persian, are Sufi. Finally, Leslie and Wassel postulate that the geographic sources of Liu's work are Central Asian, Persian and the original Arabic.¹⁰⁶ It should be noted that both the teaching of Wang and Liu were popular in Nanjing during the 17th and 18th centuries. Their works have gone through various re-printings through the last two centuries.

The legacy of Wang and Liu is unquestionable. Often, their publications have been bound together and used as a standard textbook for basic Islamic materials. Suffice to mention at this moment three scholars indebted to Liu's legacy. Firstly, Ma Lianyuan, 馬聯元 (1840-1903) in Yunnan, eagerly promoted Islamic education in that province. He was fluent in both Arabic and Chinese and encouraged bilingual Islamic teaching in both languages. Ma translated Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* into Arabic. His translation of Liu's text was very free and should be regarded as a paraphrase of Liu's own work. This indicated the popularity of Liu's writing. Secondly, another Chinese Muslim scholar, named, Ma Qixi 馬啟西 (1857-1914) championed Islamic learning in the province of Gansu, North China. He initially set up tents in his house for the sake of easier access to Islamic learning. This setup later became a community centre. He used Liu's writings as his teaching materials. His students came from far and near, even sacrificing their livelihood in order to learn from Ma. Not only was Ma well acquainted with Liu's writings, he also advocated the *Jahriyya* Sufi order which was the largest among the four Chinese Sufi movements (*menhuan* 門宦).¹⁰⁷ With his emphasis on Islamic education, Ma established a unique and rapidly expanding Muslim community, called Xi Dao Tang 西道堂 with teaching staff and learning centres. This community was not merely a *madrasa*. The community centre also operated

¹⁰⁶ Donald D. Leslie and Mohamed Wassel, 'Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih,' *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982) 104.

¹⁰⁷ Ma Deliang 馬德良, 丁謙 Ding Qian, '劉智思想對西道堂影響淺析,' *Studies in World's Religions* (1995) 18.

commercial activities in order to fund all the Islamic teaching activities. Ma extended branches into other big cities including the Chinese capital.¹⁰⁸ The Xi Dao Tang began to decline by the mid-20th century. However, Xi Dao Tang still exists today and has contributed towards the modernization of China.¹⁰⁹ Finally, not only Liu's writings were translated into Arabic by Ma; Liu's teaching on the life of the prophet Muhammad was translated into English by Isaac Mason in 1921.¹¹⁰ While Liu began his career in Nanjian, his teaching and writings live on both in the provinces of Yunnan and Gansu, both areas densely populated by the Hui today. There is a clear resurgence of interest in Liu's writings. Research theses on his writings have been published recently in book length as well as in many academic journals. Some earlier copies of Liu Zhi's works are on public display in Beijing Niujie mosque today.

(3) *Ma Dexin (1794 – 1874)*

Ma Dexin was born in the southwestern province of Yunnan in the late Qing dynasty and led a group of Hui Muslims into political rebellion in Kunming city against the Qing government in 1857. He acquired a thorough and comprehensive education in Arabic and Persian both in Yunnan and Shan Xi province. He made a pilgrimage to Mecca at the age of 50 and made use of the opportunity of seven years of pilgrimage to search, copy and collect important Islamic manuscripts. Ma's works are in both Chinese and Arabic. His Chinese works are significant in that they intentionally complement the Islamic activities of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ma Tong 馬通, *中國伊斯蘭教派與門宦制度史略 A General History of Islamic Religious Sects and [Sufi] Tariqat in China, Revised Edition* (Yinchuan: People's Press of Ningxia, 2000) 113-151. Also, Ma Tong 馬通, *中國伊斯蘭教派門宦溯源 修訂版 Roots of Islamic Religious Sects and [Sufi] Tariqat* (Yinchuan: People's Press of Ningxia, 2000 [rev. ed.]).

¹⁰⁹ Gao Zhanfu 高占福, 'The Problem of Religion and the Modernization of China seen from the Perspective of Xi Dao Tang,' *Studies in World Religions* 68 (1997) 93-98.

¹¹⁰ Isaac Mason, trans., *The Arabian Prophet: a Life of Mohammed from Chinese and Arabic Sources, a Chinese-Moslem by Liu Chia-lien* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1921). Liu Chia-lien is another name of Liu Zhi.

¹¹¹ See for details, Yang Guiping, *A Study of Ma Dexin's Thoughts* (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2004). Yang argues that Ma's works sought to identify Islamic culture and thoughts with the Confucian culture. Ma attempted to persuade the Hui people to obey their traditional Islamic principles and

His two well-known Chinese works are *An Explanation of Four Classics* and *The Final Return of the Great Transformation*.¹¹² In the preface, Ma lamented that both the works of Wang and Liu did not give adequate exposition of the doctrine of return to the Real.¹¹³ So, his works sought to supplement both of their works. In particular, he wrote a commentary on Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* (天方性理注釋). One of his followers, Ma Lianyuan wrote a commentary of *The Nature and Principle in Islam* in Arabic.

Ma Dexin's Islamic works represent the second and final stage of intensive Islamic activity in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Ma continued the translation and interpretation of Islamic texts using Confucian terms. Two of Ma's distinctive contributions are his emphases on the concept of return to the Real and enthusiastic support of the unique role of Prophet Muhammad as the Utmost Sage. He translated the *Poem of Eulogizing the Prophet Muhammad* (天方詩經) in Chinese with clear divisions of former life, present life and afterlife of the Prophet Muhammad. This poem originally was written by an Egyptian Sufi poet, al-Busiri (c. 1212 – c.1294) and the work is known as *Qasida al-Burda* (Poem of the Mantle). Ma got the copy during his pilgrimage and then under his supervision, he and his pupils translated the poem. In comparison with Liu Zhi's works, Ma's translated poem included a clear and more detailed explanation of the significant role of the Prophet Muhammad.¹¹⁴ The original poem has 162 lines. Ma reorganized them into ten chapters and a total of 161 lines.

The intense Islamic activities of the above three Islamic scholars in 17th-19th century China are consistent in their methodologies. They use Confucian terms to explain Islamic teaching.

simultaneously they should recognize and respect the dominant Chinese culture. Yang, *Ma Dexin's Thoughts*, 2.

¹¹² In Chinese, 四典要會, 大化總歸 respectively.

¹¹³ Yang Huaizhong and Zhengui Yu (eds.), *Islam and Chinese Culture* (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1995) 414.

¹¹⁴ Zhou Yaoming, 'On the Ideologies of the Eulogizing of Muhammad in *Tiangangshijing*' (MA Thesis, NingXia University, NingXia, 2003).

Their teachings of the unity of existence and the role of the prophet Muhammad are within the Sufi tradition in accordance with the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabi.

2.2 Philosophical Context

Daoism, Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism are commonly regarded as the Three Teachings in China. The Ming and early Qing dynasties (c. 14th-18th centuries) were a golden era for both Neo-Confucianism and Daoism because the ruling classes encouraged literature studies and literati were able to earn ministerial offices through various government-arranged examinations. The form of Confucianism in the Ming and Qing dynasties is known as Neo-Confucianism. It is not easy to define Daoism because it has assumed different aspects within its philosophical and religious system. Fung Yulan 馮友蘭 asserts that Neo-Daoism comprised both rationalists and sentimentalists.¹¹⁵ During the Yuan and Ming dynasties, occasionally the emperors would favour Neo-Daoism for various pragmatic reasons. However, Neo-Confucianism dominated Chinese culture at the time of Liu Zhi.

2.2.1 Daoism

Daoism is the most ancient of the Three Teachings. The founder of Daoism is Lao Zi (c. 571 – c. 471 B.C.E.). His work is called the book of *Lao Zi* or *Daodejing* (*Classic of the Way and Power*, 道德經). It may be divided into two section, the teaching of *dao* (way) and *de* (power). The school of classical Daoism was further developed by Zhuang Zi (c.369 – c.286 B.C.E) and his representative work is called the book *Zhuang Zi*.

The formative concepts of Daoism consist of some general principles of governing the world and man, the antithesis of *yin* and *yang*, the complementary aspects of the *dao* as natural order, mysticism and finally emphasis on afterlife. Several aspects of Daoism

¹¹⁵ Fung Yulan 馮友蘭, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Tianjin: Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2007) 356-395.

resonate with Liu Zhi's contextualization of Islamic thought. The most important philosophical teaching of Lao Zi is *dao* or the way. In Western philosophy, universals lie beyond shapes and features. It is a philosophical concept that represents the property of visible things. Red and green apples are visible things. However, red or green colour or the 'colourness' itself is called a universal which is invisible. Lao's *dao* is similar to the concept of universal but unlike universal, the *dao* cannot even be named. 'The *Dao* that can be comprised in words is not the eternal *Dao*; the name that can be named is not the abiding name. The unnamable is the beginning of heaven and earth; the namable is the mother of all things.'¹¹⁶ In Lao's observation of the existence of things, the *dao* belongs to non-being which is unnamable and by which all things come to be. Thus, the *dao* is an ontological and yet not a static concept. 'From *Dao* there comes one. From one there comes two. From two there comes three. From three there comes all things.'¹¹⁷ It is clear that from non-being comes being. H. Moeller comments on this passage and says that 'Oneness is the immediate "product" of the *Dao* —it is thus, as unity, at the "beginning" of the cosmic process. It is the foundation of twoness, the basic duality (*Yin/Yang*) that constitutes the rhythm of the cosmic course.'¹¹⁸

Zhuang Zi continued the teaching of Lao's *dao* and asserted that at the beginning there was Non-Being. It had neither being nor name and was that from which came the One. When the One came into existence, there was the One but still no form. When things obtained that by which they came into existence, it was called the *De* [power or ability]. *De* is what makes us what we are. It may be interpreted as the ability of human nature. Zhuang Zi explained the moral teaching of the *dao* and *de*. In chapter one of *Zhuang Zi* called *The Happy Excursion*, Zhuang outlined the way of achieving absolute and relative happiness. Relative happiness could be achieved by the free development of our human nature. When humans allowed their natural ability to be fully and freely exercised, they are in a state of happiness. However, absolute happiness could only be achieved through higher

¹¹⁶ *Daodejing*, the first chapter.

¹¹⁷ *Daodejing*, the forty-second chapter.

¹¹⁸ Hans-Georg Moeller, *Philosophy of the Daodejing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) 40.

understanding of the nature of things. Zhuang distinguished between what is of nature and what is of man. Chinese philosopher Fung Yulan explains the distinction that

“What is of nature,” [Zhuang] says, “is internal. What is of man is external. ...That oxen and horses should have four feet is what is of nature. That a halter should be put on a horse’s head, or a string through an ox’s nose, is what is of man.”

Things are different in their nature and their natural ability is also not the same. What they share in common, however, is that they are all equally happy when they have a full and free exercise of their natural ability.¹¹⁹

It should be noted that both Lao and Zhuang did not give clear systematic exposition of the concept of *dao*. Lao did not equate *dao* with the mind. The *dao* is regarded as mystery of mysteries. This present work is to show later that Liu Zhi’s contextualization occasionally made use of some Daoist concepts in particular the concept of *dao* and the moral implication of *dao* and *de* (the way and natural ability). Furthermore, within the mysticism of Daoism, there is a concept of the perfect man in later Daoism.¹²⁰

2.2.2 Buddhism

Buddhism first entered China via Central Asia in the first century and continued to expand in influence. The most influential period is in the 6th-10th century. Its growth is due to the effort of non-Chinese missionaries from India into China and the gradual collection of imported Buddhist texts or *sutras* and later translation of these sacred texts into Chinese. Buddhism grew because it effectively absorbed other Chinese religious and philosophical concepts including Confucianism and Daoism.

Inculturation in late Ming dynasty was not the monopoly of any religious group including the successful Jesuit missionaries in the Ming imperial court. A Buddhist monk, Zhixu Ouyi (1599-1655) contextualized the Daoist classic *Yijing* (Classic of Change) by writing

¹¹⁹ Fung Yulan, *Short History*, 170.

¹²⁰ Fung Yulan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* Vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953) 231-36.

numerous works, including a Buddhist commentary of *Yijing*, namely a *Chanist Explanation of the Changes*.¹²¹ While a Buddhist usually emphasized release by emptiness of the mind, Zhixu was attracted to *Yijing* by the concept of Shen (wonder or god). ‘Shen is the efficient cause that translates the knowing capacity of the mind into actual understanding.’¹²² Yuet Keung Lo offers an insightful analysis of Zhixu and his contextualized commentary. Lo labels Zhixu as an eclecticist rather than a syncretist. In his commentary of *Yijing*, Zhixu began to realize the multifarious nature of Change in the teaching of *Yijing*. ‘The ultimate truth is dynamic, revealing itself in changes. Ultimate transformation in personal terms lies in understanding the revelation of Change by virtue of the inscrutable power of the shen inspired by the mind in a uniquely and idiosyncratically personal way.’¹²³ Thus, his adaptation was ethically based and for the sake of personal transformation which was fundamentally the Buddhist goal. Therefore, the late Ming dynasty was clearly a period of religious openness as illustrated by the successful inculturation of Catholicism and adaptation of the Buddhist’s emptiness of mind into the Daoist’s ultimate truth.

By the early Qing dynasty, the trend of ecumenical and syncretic openness to various religio-cultural traditions began to stifle. The Qing emperor Yongzheng (1678-1735) acknowledged that Buddhism, Daoism and Islam derived from the same source and he asserted that each had its own specialties, strengths and areas of inadequacy. However, his tolerance was merely pragmatic and political motivated. His aim was to discourage any rivalry between religious aristocrats or court officials taking sides. By the 1730’s, any

¹²¹ Ouyi Zhixu is considered one of the four great Buddhist masters of the Ming dynasty. In his youth, he engaged in Confucian studies. At 24, he became a Buddhist after he had had a great insight. He was famous for his *Collected Essays Refuting Heterodoxy*. In this work, he vehemently criticized the teaching of the Jesuits. He argued that there was a clear difference between Christianity and Confucianism. See Ouyi Zhixu, Charles B. Jones (tr.), ‘Pi Xie Ji: Collected Refutations of Heterodoxy by Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655),’ *Pacific World* 11 (2009) 351-407.

¹²² Yuet Keung Lo, ‘Change Beyond Syncretism: Ouyi Zhixu’s Buddhist Hermeneutics of the *Yijing*,’ *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35 (2008) 286.

¹²³ Lo, ‘Change Beyond Syncretism,’ 290.

creative interaction between religions was effectively stifled among the elites and other intellectuals.¹²⁴

There are different schools of Buddhist teaching in different parts of Asia. Sacred texts that are translated into Chinese belong to the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) school which had major impact of Buddhism in China. Within Mahayana Buddhism, there exist different schools of thought. In general terms, two major philosophical concepts of Buddhism in China are oneness of reality and enlightenment. The concept of oneness of reality is a theory expounded by Daosheng (d. 434) who advanced many revolutionary theories. This oneness means an individual could identify with what is called the Buddha-nature. It is the self-consciousness of the individual's original identification with the universal mind. Humans could achieve Buddhahood by means of enlightenment. Fung Yulan explains this concept succinctly as follows:

Every sentient being has the Buddha-nature; only he does not realize that he has it. This Ignorance (Avidya) is what binds him to the Wheel of Birth and Death. The necessity, therefore, is for him first to realize that he has the Buddha-nature originally within him, and then, by learning and practice, to "see" his own Buddha-nature. This "seeing" comes as a Sudden Enlightenment, because the Buddha-nature cannot be divided; therefore he either sees it as a whole or does not see it at all. Such "seeing" also means to be one with the Buddha-nature, because the Buddha-nature is not something that can be seen from outside.¹²⁵

The Buddhist enlightenment has moral and practical aspects. It is more than merely an acquisition of merits through good works. It is a transcending understanding that can see through this world of illusion and perceive the reality behind this world. Enlightenment consists 'of the intuitive experiencing of truth with one's whole being — an act through which the experience becomes merged with that Truth.'¹²⁶ It should be noted that at this

¹²⁴ Timothy Brook, 'Rethinking Syncretism: the Unity of the Three Teachings and their Joint Worship in Late-Imperial China,' *Journal of Chinese Religion* 21 (1993) 24.

¹²⁵ Fung, *Short History*, 412.

¹²⁶ Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 238.

period of Chinese philosophy, the universal mind or Buddha-nature remains at the level of psychological understanding.

2.2.3 Neo-Confucianism

The foundation of Neo-Confucianism was laid in the Tang dynasty (618 – 907) and took on a significant importance beginning from the 12th century. Buddhism cross-pollinated with Confucianism from the early period. By the time of the Song Dynasty in the 11th century, Daoism as religion and philosophical thought began its influence upon Confucianism. Thus, there was considerable intermingling of ideas between the three major philosophical thoughts. One of the most conspicuous Confucians who adopted religious Daoism was Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073). In his diagram of the Great Ultimate, Zhou explained the beginning and end of all things. His diagram and explanation of *yin* and *yang* were inspired by the *Book of Changes*.

Neo-Confucianism comprised two main schools of thought, the School of Principle and the School of Mind. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) belonged to the School of Principle. He is sometimes known as a synthesizer of early Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism. He did not merely gather, organize and harmonize his tradition. Rather, he developed a coherent metaphysical system by selecting and introducing his own innovative elements into such concepts as the Great Ultimate which Zhu called *chi*, the ultimate.¹²⁷ He defined *tai chi* or Great Ultimate as the sum both of the principles of all discrete phenomena and the highest principle within each of them. It was beyond the realm of human affairs and included all affairs within the universe. The whole universe was one universal whole. At the same time, he emphasized that each phenomenon was endowed with its own defining principle, i.e. the principle was one but its manifestations were many. This emphasized the organic nature between phenomena and also the generative and creative ability of the Great Ultimate. The ‘Great Ultimate’ embodied principles of activity and tranquility. It was out of these

¹²⁷ Qi Wei argues that Zhu Xi was a great philosopher because he managed to import religious ideas from both Buddhism and Taoism into neo-Confucianism. In so doing, his neo-Confucianism surpassed the other two philosophies. Qi Wei, ‘Zhu Xi’s Philosophy and Religion,’ *Studies in World’s Religions* 38 (1989) 31.

principles that the material forces of *yin* and *yang* naturally ensued. Zhu's philosophy of principle was opposed by another school of Neo-Confucianism, namely, the School of the Mind.¹²⁸

A key proponent of the School of the Mind was Wang Yangming (1472-1529).¹²⁹ This school conceived the mind (literal: heart) as morally self-sufficient, endowed with the innate knowledge of good and the innate ability to do good. For Wang, then, the universal was a spiritual whole, in which there was only one world, the concrete actual world that we ourselves experience. Thus there was no place for that other world of abstract ultimate principle. 'According to [Zhu's] system, all the *Li* [ultimate principles] are eternally there, no matter whether there is mind or not. But according to Wang's system, if there was no mind, there would be no *Li*. Thus the mind was the legislator of the universe and was that by which the *Li* are legislated.'¹³⁰ The most significant contribution made by Wang was that he asserted a doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action. That is, knowledge was limited to moral knowledge and must have its logical expression in action. Action must be firmly based in knowledge. He tied moral knowledge to action and upheld the paramount importance of mind rather than metaphysical principle called *li* by Zhu. Modern scholars do not see the two schools as opponents but both of them were continuations of the great Neo-Confucian tradition of the Chinese history of philosophy.¹³¹ It should be noted that Liu Zhi's emphasis on the role of heart is likely influenced by the School of Mind.

During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Zhu's philosophy always dominated Wang's. In 1644, the Qing imperial rulers reaffirmed the philosophy of Zhu and the school of ultimate principle as the orthodox teaching. Zhu's commentaries on Confucius were upheld and formed the basis for the civil service examinations. In the late 17th century,

¹²⁸ In Chinese 心學. The literal word of mind is heart (*xing*). Scholars usually call this school as the school of mind and not the school of heart.

¹²⁹ See Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: the Way of Wang Yangming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

¹³⁰ Fung, *Short History*, 508.

¹³¹ This includes Fung Yulan and other contemporary Neo-Confucian scholars.

Neo-Confucian scholars tended to compromise between the perceived rationalism of Zhu and the idealism of Wang.

2.3 Islamic Context

The Scripture Hall Education System began in Shan Xi in the 16th century. It gradually developed and established a teaching syllabus of about thirteen approved textbooks.¹³² Only a few of these textbooks belong to the Sufi tradition. In Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, he gave a list of about sixty books that he had referred to. However, Murata asserts that about six books were influential for Liu Zhi.¹³³ Four of them are Sufi writings. The fifth book in Arabic, *al-Mawaqif fi 'ilm al-kalam* (The Standpoints in the Science of Theology) is quoted nine times and the sixth book is a well-known commentary of the Qur'an by Baydawi (d. ca. 1300). The most frequently quoted Sufi text by Liu Zhi is Razi's *Mirsad al-'ibad* (cited thirty times). The second Sufi text is Jami's *al-Lama'at* (cited fifteen times). Jami is a supporter and follower of Ibn 'Arabi's teachings. The third Sufi text is Nasafi's *Maqсад-i aqsa* (cited fourteen times). The fourth Sufi text is Jami's *Lawa'ih* (cited eleven times). Liu Zhi translated *Lawa'ih* into Chinese and interpreted this short Sufi work.

2.3.1 Early Islamic Texts in Chinese

(1) *Najm al-Din Razi*¹³⁴ (1177-1256) and *Mirsad al-'ibad* (The Path of the Servant from the Origin to the Return)

Mirsad al-'ibad is a required and approved Sufi textbook in the Scripture Hall Education System in 16th-18th century China. Najm al-Din Razi lived in turbulent times. Threats came

¹³² Li Xinghua, Qin Huibin, Feng Jinyuan, and Sha Quizhen, *History of Islam in China* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science Press, 1998) 419-23.

¹³³ Murata, *The Sage*, 11.

¹³⁴ The work that Liu Zhi drew upon is Razi's *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return*. That is, Najm al-Din Razi, Hamid Algar (tr.), *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return (Mirsad al-'ibad men al-mabda' ila'l-ma'ad): a Sufi Compendium* (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1982).

from the Crusaders in the West and the Mongols from the East. Razi's writings focused on the exploration and analysis of the visionary states experienced by the seekers in the course of their mystical journey. His work *Mirsad al-'ibad* in 1223 was intended as a gift to seekers and lovers of truth from a particular Sufi view. Razi's Sufism took a middle course between the mystics who concentrated on ecstasy and raptures and made light of religious rituals and the ascetic mystics who emphasized worship through meticulous or excessive performance of religious duties. *Mirsad al-'ibad* is divided into five parts and is written in a systematic and comprehensive manner. It begins with the origins and orders of creation, prophethood, the ritual practices and institutions of Sufi thought. The main discussion concerns different classes of people and different professions and trades who should follow the path and arrive at their destinations. In following the path, they reap spiritual benefit and heavenly rewards.

Mirsad al-'ibad describes spiritual ascent through meditation upon various Qur'anic images of stars, moon and sun and also relates it to the condition of the heart. The heart becomes mirror-like and is able to reflect knowledge that has come from the spiritual world.¹³⁵

As for those lights that are seen in the form of heavenly bodies, — stars, moons and suns - they derive from the lights of spirituality that appear in the sky of the heart, in accordance with its degree of purity... It sometimes happens that the soul attains such purity that it appears to be like the sky, and the heart is seen in it like the moon. If the full moon is seen, the heart has become completely pure; if it is less than full, a degree of impurity remains in the heart. When the mirror of the heart attains perfect purity and begins receiving the light of the spirit, that light will be witnessed in the likeness of the sun. The brightness of the sun is in proportion to the degree of the heart's purity, until a point is reached in which the heart is a thousand times brighter than the external sun. If the moon and the sun are witnessed

¹³⁵ Ibn 'Arabi emphasized the role of heart in the knowledge of reality. D. Singh, 'Heart; the Way to Knowing Reality,' *Bulletin of the Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies* 15 (1996) 20-40. Also, D. Singh, *Sainthood and Revelatory Discourse* (Oxford: Regnum International, 2003) 62-101.

together, then the moon is the heart, illuminated with the reflection of the light of the spirit, and the sun is the spirit.¹³⁶

Akiro Matsumoto opines that *Mirsad al-‘ibad* is preferred over other Sufi works of a similar genre in China because ‘in the last chapter of the book there is a call for people to fit into a society governed by temporary rulers in order to secure their religious life.’¹³⁷ *Mirsad al-‘ibad* advocates a peaceful and harmonious way of life with the ruling class and other people of different cultures. For Matsumoto, this explains to a large extent its popularity. Thus, it is not coincidence that in his *Five Sessions of the Moon* Sufi poem, Liu Zhi consciously uses the images of the moon, heart, purity and others as found in *Mirsad al-‘ibad* to expound his teaching of the Sufi path in Neo-Confucian terms. For Liu, heart means the locus of human awareness and consciousness.¹³⁸ Also, Liu Zhi’s *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* supports the legitimate rule of the Qing government and encourages Muslims to be obedient both the Qing emperor as well as the Real Ruler of Islam.

(2) *Abd al-Rahman Jami’s Ashi‘at al-Lama‘at* (Rays of the Flashes) and
Lawa’ih (Gleams)

The contributions of Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414 – 1492) have been well known in Islam. He was a follower of the Naqshbandi Sufi order and was recognized by his contemporaries as a major authority in science, philosophy, astronomy, music, art and most important of all poetry. He was a great admirer of the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi. He greatly enriched, analyzed and also developed the school of Ibn ‘Arabi. He ‘has the ability to bring new life to the material by means of a style that is fresh, graceful, supple and highly distinguished ...’¹³⁹ One of the important concepts in his Sufism is the unity of the existence of God. Jami stated “we and Thou are not separate from each other, but we need

¹³⁶ Razi, H. *The Path of God’s Bondsmen*, 296.

¹³⁷ Matsumoto, ‘The Sufi Intellectual Tradition’, 107.

¹³⁸ Murata says that the Sufis prefer “heart” to the philosophers’ “intellect” when the subject concerned is self-realization. Murata, *Sage*, 57. Liu is aware that *The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* should address the heart rather than the intellect as this poem is meant for general readership.

¹³⁹ C. Huart, ‘Djami’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1965 [new edn.]) 422.

Thee, whereas Thou doest not need us.” For Jami, love for the Prophet Muhammad was the fundamental stepping-stone for starting on the journey. Two of his works explain the unity of existence and are translated into Chinese. These works were used as part of the teaching syllabus in the Scripture Hall Education System.

Jami’s *Ashi‘at al-Lama‘at* is another required and approved Sufi textbook in the Scripture Hall Education System. It was translated into Chinese by She Yunshan (c. 1638 – c. 1703). A most recent translation in Chinese was published in 2001 and translated by Ruan Bin with commentaries.¹⁴⁰ The work may be divided into two parts. The first part is shorter. It is the preface and gives not just the reason for the work. Jami gave over 20 different explanations of the concept of being in the preface. It explains the process of emanation from the beginning. These explanations become the foundation of understanding the flashes in the later major part of the work. The second part is Jami’s teaching about flashes which consists of twenty nine discussions. Thus, Jami wrote in order to make clearer the teaching of the unity of existence. The emanation begins in the innate heaven and later moves into the acquired heaven. This process is known as descent. The process continues from the acquired heaven back to the Real which is known as the ascent. These understanding of the cosmogony, descent into acquired heaven and ascent into the Real are common themes in Liu Zhi’s theosophy of Islam.

The second work is Jami’s *Lawa’ih*. It is a reference textbook in the Scripture Hall Education System. Liu Zhi translated it into Chinese. This work will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

(3) Aziz al-Din Nasafi’s (d. c. 1300) and Maqsad-i aqsa (The Furthest Goal)

Aziz Nasafi’s *Maqsad-i aqsa* is a reference textbook of the Scripture Hall Education System. Nasafi was born in Central Asia and had followers in Iran. Nasafi’s work *Maqsad-i*

¹⁴⁰ Jami, *Rays of Flashes*, Ruan Bin (trans.) (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2001).

aqsa was produced probably before 1281, during the latter part of his life.¹⁴¹ It was a theological treatise on God's essence, attributes and acts. It also discussed views of God as taught by other philosophers, *ulama* and Sufis. His own worldview entailed an image of the four seas. Extant manuscripts are also found in India, Pakistan and China.¹⁴² *Maqsad-i aqsa* had a coherent writing style. The teaching of God's essence and attributes had a striking resemblance to Ibn 'Arabi's vision of God, in particular, understanding God as both incomparable (*tanzih*) and similar (*tashbih*) with the world. That is, God is both He/not He.¹⁴³ The emphasis of this particular work by Nasafi is a detailed discussion of the levels of existence in the image of four seas, with an interpretation similar to Ibn 'Arabi's school. In *Maqsad-i aqsa*, Nasafi also discussed the perfect man as the divine presence. Clearly, his worldview was an ontological hierarchy of the four seas (levels of existence) and the perfect man who comprehended all the four seas. His last two chapters in *Maqsad-i aqsa* explain the four seas.

Liu Zhi's works have been influenced primarily but not exclusively by Sufi thoughts. The main source of Sufi thoughts comes from primarily the Ibn 'Arabi's tradition through the works of Jami and Nasafi. Liu Zhi's works contribute towards the Islamic teachings in the Scripture Hall Education System and they continue the moderate or *shari'a*-minded Sufism.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ *Maqsad-i aqsa* was translated into Chinese in the seventeenth century by She Yunshan. It was summarized by Ma Fuchu in the eighteenth century. Matsumoto, 'Sufi Intellectual Tradition,' 107.

¹⁴² Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon, *Aziz Nasafi* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998) 210-11.

¹⁴³ Ridgeon, *Nasafi*, 17-19.

¹⁴⁴ Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu and Ma Dexin explicitly condemned *non-shari'a*-minded Sufism in their writings. Yin, *Sufism in China*, 185-92.

2.3.2 The Ibn ‘Arabi Tradition and the Concept of Unity of Existence

(1) Some Foundational Principles of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Writings

The overarching principle of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Islamic thought is *tawhid* (unity of God) which can be understood by considering various complementary pair of ideas.¹⁴⁵ Only two of Ibn ‘Arabi’s key thoughts will be discussed because they are more relevant to this study. The first pair is represented by bringing together (*kur’an*) and separation or differentiation (*furkan*). The second pair is incomparability (*tanzih*) and similarity (*tashbih*). Bringing together means that God brings all things together under his unitary creativity. Differentiation means that God has the knowledge and wisdom in all the differentiations of reality. Thus, God is one through his essence and many through his differentiated knowledge. This twin principle of the oneness of God and manyness of his knowledge gives existence to this cosmos. From the human perspective, the soul manifests the manyness of knowledge and the spirit the oneness of existence (*wujud*). Both the bringing together and differentiation ‘signify the two basic principles in terms of which God creates the universe and reveals himself in the “sign” (*ayat*) that are found in the three fundamental domains of manifestation: the universe, the soul and the Book.’¹⁴⁶

The second complementary pair in Ibn ‘Arabi’s key thought is based on two interrelated and yet balanced concepts: God’s incomparability (*tanzih*) and his similarity (*tashbih*). *Tanzih* ‘is to assert that God is pure and free of all the defects and imperfections of the creatures ... [*Tashbih*] is to assert that God must have some sort of similarity with his creatures.’¹⁴⁷ The twin perspectives of incomparability and similarity must be kept in view and balanced. God is far and he is also near. God is beautiful and stirs up love in the human

¹⁴⁵ William Chittick, ‘Tasawwuf: Ibn al-‘Arabi and After in the Arabic and Persian Lands and Beyond’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000 [new edn]) 317-24.

¹⁴⁶ William Chittick, ‘Tasawwuf: Ibn al-‘Arabi and After in the Arabic and Persian Lands and Beyond’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000 [new edn.]) 318.

¹⁴⁷ S. Murata and William Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1996) 71.

heart and yet this beauty is not like any created thing.¹⁴⁸ Thus, in the midst of his nearness he is far. In the midst of his similarity, he is incomparable. According to Chittick, Ibn ‘Arabi’s insistence on the connection between *tanzih* and *tashbih* has great bearing upon his epistemology. ‘In brief, reason is innately constituted to set up distinctions and differentiations and thus to think abstractly... True knowledge depends upon seeing all things with both the eye of imagination and the eye of reason.’¹⁴⁹ Based on these two key thoughts, Ibn ‘Arabi’s understanding of reality and existence should not be considered as a strict philosophical system of epistemology. It is an emblem (according to Chittick) or may be understood as a Sufi vision of existence. Such a vision is governed by his concept of God’s unity and affirms the necessity of both modes of knowing. God is one in his essence and many in his knowledge. He has the unity of his essence and the multiplicity of his names. He embraces incomparability and similarity, and “He” and “not He”. Ibn ‘Arabi criticized others who emphasized or overemphasized just one mode of knowledge.¹⁵⁰ One should envision God with both eyes. Any single-eyed vision will suffer and distort the view of reality and is insufficient as a guide to God and as a judge of other viewpoints. It is important to keep both modes of knowing in healthy balance, both in the soul and in rational interactions. For Ibn ‘Arabi then, to say merely “All is He” is short-sightedness. It is not considered as the highest stage on the path to God because it is seeing with one eye.¹⁵¹ With the other eye also, the true Sufi can see that all is not He. Ibn ‘Arabi’s Sufi vision of God’s existence is both “He/not He”.

¹⁴⁸ D. Singh, ‘The Possibility of Having Knowing of *al-wujud al-mahd* ‘sheer being’ According to Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Kitab al-jalal wa-al-jamal*,’ *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10.3 (1999) 295-306.

¹⁴⁹ William Chittick, ‘Ibn ‘Arabi’ in Ian Richard Netton (ed.), *Islamic Philosophy and Theology IV* (London: Routledge, 2007) 126-27.

¹⁵⁰ One well-known example in Islamic history is Al-Hallaj (c.858 – 922). L. Massingnon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam IV* volumes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

¹⁵¹ William Chittick, ‘*Wahdat al-Shuhud* and *Wahdat al-Wujud*’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002 [new edn.]) 38.

(2) *History and Development of the Concept of Unity of Existence in the Ibn ‘Arabi Tradition*

According to William Chittick, oneness of existence is not the highest expression of Ibn ‘Arabi’s teaching. The term *wahdat al-wujud* was not used explicitly by Ibn ‘Arabi.¹⁵² Furthermore, Ibn ‘Arabi’s understanding of the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* was gradually developed in his late literature and should be not based on a single or a few scattered sayings.¹⁵³ Chittick also insists that there is no doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* as such in Ibn ‘Arabi. Rather, *wahdat al-wujud* was an emblem for Ibn ‘Arabi and ‘if al-‘Arabi was considered its founder, this simply indicates that his writings mark Sufism’s massive entry into the theological discussion of *wujud* that before him had been the almost exclusive preserve of the philosophers and the *mutakallimun*.¹⁵⁴ The actual term *wahdat al-wujud* was developed by certain followers of Ibn ‘Arabi, including his pupil and stepson Sadr al-Din Qunawi (d. 1274). It is Sa‘id al-Din Farghani (d. 1300) who gave *wahdat al-wujud* a technical and specific meaning.¹⁵⁵ The meaning of the term eventually was established by the time of Ibn al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492), a propagator of Ibn ‘Arabi’s metaphysical teachings.¹⁵⁶ Two works of Jami are included as reference texts in the Scripture Hall

¹⁵² M. Asin Palacios suggested that Dante’s Divine Comedy had its source in Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept of *wahdat al-wujud*. M. Asin Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (London: John Murray, 1926) 160.

¹⁵³ William Chittick, ‘Rumi and *wahdat al-wujud*’ in A. Banani and G. Sabagh (eds.), *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam The Heritage of Rumi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 73. Owing to a lack of careful reading of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works, Chittick argues that one may misinterpret and classify Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings as pantheism, panentheism, existential monism, pantheistic monism or the like, not only in a Middle Eastern but also in a Malay-Indonesian context.

¹⁵⁴ William Chittick, ‘*Wahdat al-Shuhud* and *Wahdat al-Wujud*’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002 [new edn.]) 37-39, citing 37.

¹⁵⁵ William Chittick, ‘Spectrums of Islamic Thought: Sa‘id al-Din Farghani on the Implication of Oneness and Manyness’ in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism. The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500) Volume II* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999) 208-09.

¹⁵⁶ Caner K. Dagli studies the concept of the oneness of being from a historical development of the meaning of *wujud* and *wahdat al-wujud* for four generations from Ibn ‘Arabi to Damud al-Qaysari (c. 1260 – c. 1350). He notes that there has been gradual adoption and sophistication of the technical language of the study of being i.e. ontology. This increased level of sophistication is due to Sufism’s effort to incorporate the prevailing philosophical and theological language of Islam. Thus, Dagli adopts a dynamic approach to the understanding of the oneness of being. While Ibn ‘Arabi uses *wahdat al-wujud* as a fundamental vision of reality or as an intellectual key to Sufi treading the spiritual path, his later Sufi disciples and Ibn ‘Arabi supporters interwove philosophy, theology and mysticism. See Caner K. Dagli, ‘From Mysticism to Philosophy (and Back): an Ontological History of the School of The Oneness of Being’ (PhD thesis, Princeton: Princeton University, 2006) vi-ix.

Education System in 16th-18th century China. The history of the term *wahdat al-wujud* is summarized by Chittick:

The term is not found in the writings of Ibn al-‘Arabi. For Qunawi, it has no specific technical sense ... In Farghani's writing, *wahdat al-wujud* is well on its way to becoming a technical term, but it does not stand on its own, since it needs to be complemented by *kathrat al-‘ilm*, the manyness of knowledge ... other figures like Ibn Sab‘in and Nasafi were employing the term as a kind of shorthand to allude to the fundamental nature of things. Ibn Taymiyya seized upon the expression as a synonym for the great heresies of unificationism and incarnationism. By the time of Jami, and perhaps much before, *wahdat al-wujud* became the designation for an expression of *tawhid* that was typified by the writings of Ibn al-‘Arabi and his followers.¹⁵⁷

Chittick helpfully summarizes several possible meanings of the term *wahdat al-wujud* from both supporters and opponents of *wahdat al-wujud*.¹⁵⁸ The meanings offered by supporters are:

- 1.0 Qunawi and Farghani would use *wahdat al-wujud* as a straightforward statement about *wujud* (existence or being) and make no reference to the complicated thoughts behind this term. For them, the divine being had manyness and plurality in his self-manifestation and such emanation or self-disclosure was affirmed by *wahdat al-wujud*.
- 2.0 In the later tradition of Ibn ‘Arabi, for followers like Ibn Sab‘in (d. 1270) and Aziz al-Din Nasafi (d. before 1300), *wahdat al-wujud* was a sufficient statement about the nature of things. Things in their multiplicity possessed a certain reality.
- 3.0 In the later tradition of Sufism and Islamic philosophy, the term meant *tawhid* and was used primarily by Sufis to express the unity of God.

While Chittick supports a distinction between *wahdat al-shuhud* and *wahdat al-wujud*, he disagrees with Massignon because he gave a simplistic dichotomy, namely static and dynamic, to these two terms. In addition, he failed to appreciate the highly complex

¹⁵⁷ William Chittick, ‘Rumi and *wahdat al-wujud*’ in A. Banani and G. Sabagh (eds.), *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam The Heritage of Rumi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 87.

¹⁵⁸ Chittick, ‘Rumi and *wahdat al-wujud*,’ 88-90.

doctrinal synthesis of oneness of existence and manyness of knowledge behind the concept of *wahdat al-wujud*. Chittick pleads for caution when people use the term *wahdat al-wujud*.

In general, sympathizers see *wahdat al-wujud* as a restatement of *tawhid* in the language of the advanced and refined intellectuality of later Islamic history, while detractors consider it a deviation from the supposedly clear distinctions drawn between God and cosmos by the early and relatively unsophisticated schools of theology. Nevertheless, the term *wahdat al-wujud* carries a good deal of baggage because of the long debate over its use. Thus all sorts of complications can arise that obscure what is at issue.¹⁵⁹

Mulla Sadra (c.1571 – 1650) is a significant figure in the history and development of the concept of unity of existence in the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition. He transformed and developed Ibn ‘Arabi’s Sufi vision into a theosophical and philosophical system. Sadra made several important contributions to the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition and grounded his vision on more mature Peripatetic philosophical arguments.¹⁶⁰

Sajjad H. Rizvi clarifies Sadra’s teaching of divine self-disclosure. While God is the processual type of cause, he is also the processual sustainer. Divine self-disclosure indicates that God is both a transcendent, incomparable creator and immanent, participatory sustainer. That is, God is the one who participates in things and causes things to participate in him mutually. In addition, Rizvi explicates that rather than emphasizing God as the first cause, Sadra prefers to speak of the participatory immanence of God who introduces the one into all levels of the world-process. For Rizvi, Sadra is cautious to point out that it is not an equal mutual interpenetrated relation between two entities. Rather, ‘all that is other than God does not exist in reality. Things exist not because God causes them to exist but because He exists.’¹⁶¹ Thus, Sadra has provided a creative synthesis between the priority of existence and gradations of the reality of being to explain the relation between God and the world in the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition based on his theosophical system. While Rizvi describes

¹⁵⁹ Chittick, ‘Rumi and *wahdat al-wujud*,’ 91.

¹⁶⁰ Dagli, ‘Mysticism to Philosophy,’ 31.

¹⁶¹ Sajjad H. Rizvi, ‘Mulla Sadra and Causation: Rethinking a Problem in Later Islamic Philosophy,’ *Philosophy East and West* 55 (2005) 575.

Ibn 'Arabi as a rationalizing mystic, he calls Sadra the mystical philosopher because Sadra uses experience as a means of understanding, the grounds for explaining, the truth.¹⁶² That is, 'experience is the ground for philosophy and philosophical discourse is a means for making sense of that experience.'¹⁶³

The philosophical contribution of Sadra to the Ibn 'Arabi tradition has been confirmed by various contemporary scholars of Sadra in addition to Rizvi. According to Chittick, Sadra's achievement is 'an intellectual synthesis within which rational, philosophical speculation is combined with the mystical intuitions of the Sufis, the Koranic exegesis of the theologians, and a thorough familiarity with the Shi'ite hadith literature, which discusses the Divine Unity in technical terms peculiar to itself.'¹⁶⁴ In addition, Ibrahim Kalim argues that the concept *wahdat al-wujud* itself becomes a dynamic concept in Sadra's realist ontology. Kalim asserts that Sadra's central thought is ultimately God's face turned to the world. Sadra's ontology 'is a step towards uncovering an aspect of the Divine, which, for Sadra, is the ultimate source of all being and knowledge.'¹⁶⁵ Kalim asserts that Sadra's principle of gradation has a hierarchical order of being in which substances move either upward or downward in accordance with their ontological state. A being intensifies its potential and attains perfection in terms of its properties and qualities. Kalim illustrates such an intensification with an apple which turns redder when it ripens. Redness is not an existential property of the apple for Sadra who argues that the ripened apple is another mode of existence of apple itself. Thus, Sadra 'construes [things] as various modes and states of being in which a subject intensifies or diminishes.'¹⁶⁶

Rizvi summarizes succinctly Sadra's creative appropriation of Ibn 'Arabi's *wahdat al-wujud*. 'Mulla Sadra is thus not caught between monism and pluralism, but rather seeks to escape the paradigms offered by Ibn 'Arabi by attempting to produce a synthesis based on

¹⁶² Rizvi, 'Mysticism and Philosophy,' 231.

¹⁶³ Rizvi, 'Mysticism and Philosophy,' 231,

¹⁶⁴ Chittick, 'Mysticism versus Philosophy', 88.

¹⁶⁵ Ibrahim Kalim, 'Mulla Sadra's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge,' *The Muslim World* 94 (2004) 81.

¹⁶⁶ Kalim, 'Mulla Sadra's Realist Ontology,' 93.

the notion of grades of intensity of content in our experience of things, corresponding to greater and lesser degrees of the manifestation of Being.’¹⁶⁷

2.3.3 The Ibn ‘Arabi Tradition and Sufi Spirituality

Sufi thought, in particular Sufi spirituality, in the 17th and 18th-century has been widely studied in western scholarship.¹⁶⁸ In 16th-18th-century China, Sufism was common. However, Sufism today in China is no longer regarded as one of the mainstream branches of Islamic thought and is now being sidelined.¹⁶⁹ In China, the political turmoil in the early 20th century and lack of religious freedom until the mid-20th century have stifled any scholarly study on Islam in general, let alone Sufi thought. Despite these setbacks, studies on Sufi thought in China have not been completely stagnant. Jin Yijiu in China has written scholarly works on Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi and for the last twenty years also published works on theoretical Sufism in China.¹⁷⁰ It should be pointed out that Sufi spirituality is an expression of and also an interrelation with Liu Zhi’s understanding of Ibn ‘Arabi’s tradition of the unity of existence. Sufi thought in China should be understood broadly and not limited to mystical practices. Spirituality as understood by William Chittick, Annemarie Schimmel and others embraces a broader dimension including the culture, literature and arts of the Islamic world.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Rizvi, ‘Mysticism and Philosophy,’ 239.

¹⁶⁸ Sufism is usually regarded as the inner dimension of Islam and concerned with both the theoretical and practical aspects of that dimension. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr (ed.), *Islamic Spirituality I Foundations* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989). Seyyed Hossein Nasr (ed.), *Islamic Spirituality II Manifestations* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1991). Spiritual manifestations include various Sufi orders, Islamic literature, art, dance and music.

¹⁶⁹ Elizabeth Sirriyeh says that the major factor in anti-Sufism after the 2nd World War is the state because of some politically activist Sufis. Despite various pressures from the state and other leading anti-Sufi reformers, both political and apolitical resurgent Sufism continue to flourish in many areas of the Islamic world. Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi and Anti-Sufis* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999) 140-53.

¹⁷⁰ Jin Yijiu, ‘Sufism and the Islamic Writings in Chinese 蘇非派與漢文伊斯蘭教著述’, *Studies in World Religions* 16 (1983) 100-109. Jin Yijiu, *The Mysticism of Sufism in Islam 伊斯蘭教的蘇非神秘主義* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, 1995). Jin, *Sufism in China* (2013).

¹⁷¹ A. Schimmel in her well known work, *Deciphering the Signs of God*, discusses Islamic mysticism from a perspective of signs, ranging from natural environment like plants and animals, to less obvious signs such as sacred time and space and eventually to ritual actions, worship and the order of the community. Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

(1) *The Ibn 'Arabi Tradition and Sufi Thought*

Scholarship is plentiful on Ibn 'Arabi's Sufism. A substantial monograph translated into English was written by the French philosopher-Islamist, Henry Corbin (1903-1978).¹⁷² He wrote from a phenomenological standpoint. At the end of the 20th century, two important scholars of Ibn 'Arabi are well known for their acclaimed scholarship. They are A. Knysh and W. Chittick. Only Knysh's work is to be outlined here as Chittick's works have been discussed. Knysh has written historical studies on Sufism in general¹⁷³ and Ibn 'Arabi and his school in particular. Knysh's work on Sufism takes its cue from the historical and socio-political contexts within which Sufism developed.¹⁷⁴ In his study, he notes that in general, the Sufi tradition 'contained vastly disparate if not diametrically opposed views and principles.'¹⁷⁵ Knysh also discusses the relationship between Sufism and the Qur'an. 'From the outset, the Qur'an was the principal source of contemplation and inspiration for every serious Muslim ascetic and mystic, whether formally Sufi or not.'¹⁷⁶ However, their interpretations have always faced oppositions from Muslim leaders. From the start to the pre-modern period, Sufi teachings have gradually grown and become distinctive practices and beliefs. Sufis have a distinctive life-style and a system of rituals. While Knysh acknowledges that Ibn 'Arabi's uses of the Qur'an are rich and varied, he argues that Ibn 'Arabi's spiritual exegesis of the Qur'an is preconditioned by his concept of the ultimate realities of existence. It is customary for the Sufi masters to exercise their imaginative faculties in order to decipher God's revelation through symbols and images.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Henry Corbin, Ralph Manheim (tr.), *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

¹⁷³ Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism. A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

¹⁷⁴ Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 3. Chittick calls this book the best historical survey of the Sufi tradition in English. See William C. Chittick, 'Islamic Mysticism: a Short History. Book Review,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33 (2001) 473-75, citing 474. Unlike Knysh who finds Sufism difficult to define, Chittick prefers to give a simple working definition of Sufism. 'Sufism can be described as the interiorization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice.' Chittick, *Sufism*, 18.

¹⁷⁵ Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 326-27.

¹⁷⁶ Knysh, 'Sufism and Qur'an,' 137.

¹⁷⁷ Knysh, 'Sufism and Qur'an,' 154.

Summarizing the discussion of Ibn ‘Arabi, Knysch’s historical study of Ibn ‘Arabi affirms that the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi have been gradually developed into a tradition, a process which has been both supported and opposed. Chittick’s study of Ibn ‘Arabi’s overall writing affirms that the concept of the unity of existence is interrelated closely with Sufi spirituality, both in theory and practice.¹⁷⁸

Discussion of Sufi thought and the way in which Ibn ‘Arabi influences Chinese Muslims have not been investigated in detail. This is due to a lack of interest by contemporary scholars who treat Sufism as a mystical and irrational pursuit of personal virtue. It should be noted that Sufi thought in China means traditionally *shari‘a*-minded Sufism. According to Jin Yijiu, two of fourteen approved textbooks in the Scripture Hall System are clearly Sufi literature.¹⁷⁹ One of them is Jami’s *Lawa’ih*. Jin also discusses in depth Liu Zhi’s Sufi thought as well as the contributions made by Sufi thought to Chinese Islam.¹⁸⁰ Jin is fully convinced that Liu was greatly influenced by Islamic mysticism.¹⁸¹ Wang Junrong 王俊榮 studies the ontology of Ibn ‘Arabi and discusses various similarities between Liu Zhi and Ibn ‘Arabi.¹⁸² Wang’s work is the only book-length monograph investigating the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabi and his influence upon Chinese Islam.

¹⁷⁸ It should be noted that often essays that are written on Ibn ‘Arabi are based on just one chapter or one written work of Ibn ‘Arabi. An undisputed contribution by Chittick is his effort to translate many passages of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works into English. His thematic study of Ibn ‘Arabi is often based on the overall writings of Ibn ‘Arabi.

¹⁷⁹ Jin Yijiu, ‘Sufism and Scripture Hall Education in China 蘇非派與中國經堂教育,’ *Studies in World Religions* (1994) 66.

¹⁸⁰ Jin, ‘Sufism and the Islamic Writings in Chinese,’ 100-109; Jin Yijiu, ‘On the Idea of the Divine Light in the Early Islamic Writings in Chinese 論漢文伊斯蘭教早期著述中的神光思想,’ *Studies in World Religions* 22 (1985) 1-11; Jin, *Sufism in Islam* (1995).

¹⁸¹ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 283-324.

¹⁸² Wang Junrong 王俊榮, *The Unity of Heaven and Man, the Return of Material Beings to Reality: Exploring the Ontology of Ibn al-‘Arabi* (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2006), 73-121.

(2) *The Ibn ‘Arabi Tradition: the Concept of the Perfect Man and
Muhammadan Reality*

Before Ibn ‘Arabi, the teaching of Muhammad as light, the Muhammadan reality and its complement concept of the perfect man were a common theme among the Sufis. An Iraqi Sufi, Sahl al-Tustari (d. 896) interpreted Sura 33:46, 53:13-14. His commentary reads as follows:

That is, in the beginning when God, Gloried and Exalted is He, created him as a light within a column of light, a million years before creation, with the essential characteristics of faith, in a witnessing of the unseen within the unseen. He stood before Him in servanthood, by the lote tree of the Ultimate Boundary (53:14), this being a tree at which the knowledge of every person reaches its limit.¹⁸³

Muhammad belonged to the sphere of light which pre-existed the creation of the world.¹⁸⁴ God created Adam from the light of Muhammad. Ibn ‘Arabi is largely responsible for the central role of this light in later Sufism.¹⁸⁵

Also, Michel Chodkiewicz explains the distinction between the Muhammadan reality and the perfect man. The two terms

[e]xpress different views of man, the first seeing him in terms of his primordality and the second in terms of his finality. The *kamal* or perfection of the *insan kamil* [perfect man] should not be understood in a ‘moral’ sense (so as to correspond with the ‘heroic virtues’) but as meaning ‘fulfillment’ or ‘completion’. Properly speaking, this perfection is possessed only by Muhammad, the ultimate and total manifestation of the *haqiqa muhammadiyah* [the reality of Muhammad]. Yet, on the other hand, it is equally the goal of all spiritual life and the very definition of *walaya* [sainthood]. Hence, the *walaya* of the *wali* [saint] can only be participation in the *walaya* of the Prophet.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Sahl al-Tustari, Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler (trans.), *Tafsir al-Tustari: Great Commentaries of the Holy Qur’an* (Amman, Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2011) 213.

¹⁸⁴ Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd., 1987) 125-26.

¹⁸⁵ Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 127.

¹⁸⁶ Michel Chodkiewicz, Liadain Sherrard (tr.), *Seal of the Saints* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993) 71.

Muhammad was the manifested principle, the messenger was the manifesting principle and the divine name Allah was the principle. Not only did the prophet Muhammad reveal God, he also implemented the divine will in this world.¹⁸⁷ He was active in divine self-disclosure and yet he was also the last prophet to appear in the flesh.¹⁸⁸ While he might look like any other human person outwardly, he was also unique in humankind because 'he carried the Divine Light, whose rays became increasingly visible as time passed.'¹⁸⁹

According to Chittick, Jami asserted three aspects of significance in the concept of the perfect man. Firstly, according to Jami, the 'Name "Allah" is a unity in which was comprised all the divine Names. Therefore any heart which knows it knows all the Names. This is in contrast to the other Names, for the knowledge of not one of them entails the knowledge of the Name "Allah".'¹⁹⁰ The manifestation of the name Allah was equivalent to the manifestation of the universe as a whole.

Secondly, the perfect man was the goal of creation. It was through the perfect man that God created the world. All other creatures depended upon him. According to Chittick, the implication is that through the perfect man, God sees unity in multiplicity. 'In Himself He sees nothing but Unity, and in the world nothing but multiplicity. But in man Unity and multiplicity are combined in such a way that all of God's Attributes are manifested within one unitary locus of theophany in the midst of the plurality of the world.'¹⁹¹

Finally, the perfect man was God's vicegerent. He was the vicegerent of "Allah" and of no other names of God. The perfect man contained the principles of all creatures. All that the world or the macrocosm contained, he or the microcosm also contained. The perfect man

¹⁸⁷ Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 134.

¹⁸⁸ D. Singh avers that both Adam and Muhammad existed prior to the creation of the world in Ibn 'Arabi's epistemological model. D. Singh, 'An Onto-Epistemological Model: Adam-Muhammad as the Traditional Symbols of Humanity's All-Comprehending Epistemic Potential,' *Muslim World* 94 (2004) 277-86.

¹⁸⁹ Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 135.

¹⁹⁰ William Chittick, 'The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jami,' *Studia Islamica* 49 (1979) 143.

¹⁹¹ Chittick, 'The Perfect Man', 151.

was the intermediate or *barzakh* between God and the world.¹⁹² Not only did he maintain the existence of the world, he also possessed the attributes of both. Chittick asserts that the perfect man is an isthmus who comprises the attributes of lordship and servanthood. ‘Through his attribute of lordship — i.e. his divine nature — he takes from God what the creatures demand. And through his attribute of servanthood he is able to establish contact with the other creatures and to see that they receive what they need from God.’¹⁹³

Furthermore, David Thomas succinctly avers that the prophet Muhammad is firstly ‘the channel of moral and ethical truth that enabled humans to live constructively and harmoniously together’.¹⁹⁴ Secondly,

Muhammad pre-eminently came to be seen as a source of wisdom that not only extended and supplemented the Qur’an, as for the legalists, or acted as a channel of revelation, but embodied esoteric wisdom in his very self, to the extent that knowledge of his ways and reflection upon his teachings opened possibilities of explaining the nature of reality and gaining proximity to God.¹⁹⁵

The concept of the perfect man has taken on a multi-faceted significance in Ibn ‘Arabi and his tradition.¹⁹⁶ For Sufis, the prophet Muhammad who has embodied the concept has become the supreme example and channel of Sufi spirituality in gaining proximity to God.

For Liu Zhi, the prophet Muhammad embodied the Confucian idea of self-realization and transformation. Liu Zhi contextualized the perfect man of the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition as the

¹⁹² Little, ‘*Al-Insan al-Kamil*’, 49.

¹⁹³ Chittick, ‘The Perfect Man’, 153.

¹⁹⁴ David Thomas, ‘Receiving and Acquiring Wisdom in Islam,’ *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 33 (2006) 439-452, citing 442.

¹⁹⁵ Thomas, ‘Receiving and Acquiring,’ 43.

¹⁹⁶ Chittick argues that the ‘underlying theme of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings is not, as many would have it, *wahdat al-wujud*, “the Oneness of Being,” but rather the achievement of human perfection.’ That is, the overarching principle of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings should be the concept of the Perfect Man. William Chittick, *Ibn ‘Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005) 49-50. Alexander Knysh admits that since Ibn ‘Arabi’s writing has an open-ended and elusive discursive strategy, it is difficult to identify one single motif. Only several constantly reemerging motifs can be identified by experienced readers. ‘Paradoxically, the discursive windows through which Ibn ‘Arabi sought to highlight the various facets of his monistic world-view leave their peculiar imprint on the ideas and experiences Ibn ‘Arabi endeavours to convey.’ Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 167.

Utmost Sage. It is in the final part of his trilogy, namely *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* that the superiority of the Utmost Sage is expounded by using carefully selected and edited narratives and discourses.

(3) The Twentieth Century Understanding of Sufi Thought and Islamic Knowledge

In 1975, Annemarie Schimmel wrote a substantial work on the mystical dimensions of Islam.¹⁹⁷ Her work focused on some features of Sufism, both historically and phenomenologically. While her work was scholarly, it did not intentionally relate theory to practice, doctrine to religious rites and orthodoxy to orthopraxis. In the present work the Sufi work of W. Chittick is to be discussed because he approaches Sufi thought from doctrinal and metaphysical perspectives. He also integrates theory with practice. Such an approach enables one to connect the doctrine of the unity of existence with Sufi spirituality.

Chittick asserts that Islam is a religion that teaches people how to understand the world and themselves. Moreover, Islam also teaches people how to transform themselves so that they may come into harmony with the ground of all being.¹⁹⁸ While a Sufi supports a theologian's claim that the basis of faith must be the Qur'an and *Hadith*, he also asserts that a true understanding of the Qur'an is achieved by unveiling. Without unveiling, the view of the theologian is purely academic or based on rational explanation. Chittick gives the following succinct summary:

The theologians held that man must believe in the Koran, then follow its directives. The Sufis said that before one can attain personal and direct understanding of the Divine Truth through unveiling, he must 'polish the mirror of the heart', which meant both practising the *Shari'ah* or exoteric Law and following the *Tariqah* or spiritual Way. As for the philosophers, they did not find it necessary to speak of practice in their purely philosophical expositions, although they often did in other works.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

¹⁹⁸ William C. Chittick, *Sufism. A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000) 5.

¹⁹⁹ Chittick, 'Mysticism versus Philosophy,' 90.

Sajjad Rizvi asserts that what Ibn ‘Arabi ‘proposed most explicitly was a Gnostic practice that would lead the seeker to an experience of the Truth ... there is little sense of a philosophical system or method in his articulation either of rational knowledge or mystical experience.’²⁰⁰ Thus, the unity of existence is a metaphysical and intellectual principle to assist the seeker to tread the spiritual path.²⁰¹ Both Ibn ‘Arabi and his well-known disciple Qunawi hardly used the term unity of existence but their Sufi vision of reality and knowledge was clear enough. It is the later followers and supporters of Ibn ‘Arabi who developed and established the more mature and sophisticated concept of the unity of existence.²⁰² The effort of these transmitters of the Ibn ‘Arabi school, namely Farghani, Jami, Nasafi and others did not merely regurgitate Ibn ‘Arabi’s teaching but interpreted and articulated the concept as a pre-modern Islamic theosophy. In addition, they contextualized it to their audiences according to their cultural and ideological settings.

Chittick asserts that Sufi spirituality is concerned primarily with right unveiling.²⁰³ It is right unveiling from the core of the Sufi’s heart and concerns the perfection of the innermost self. Right unveiling begins from the heart which is the centre of intelligence, consciousness and self-awareness and radiates forth to the whole self. It determines the Sufi’s thought and activity. The goal of the Sufis is inner awareness of the reality of things and they respond spontaneously before mental articulation to do the most wonderful thing

²⁰⁰ Sajjad H. Rizvi, ‘Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn ‘Arabi and Mulla Sadra’ in Peter Adamson, Richard C. Taylor (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 227.

²⁰¹ A. Affifi said that Ibn ‘Arabi had a definite philosophical doctrine and a formal dialectic which dominated the whole of his thought. A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnul Arabi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1939), i. Also, R. Landau, ‘The Philosophy of Ibn ‘Arabi I,’ *Muslim World* 47 (1957) 46-61; R. Landau, ‘The Philosophy of Ibn ‘Arabi II,’ *Muslim World* 47 (1957) 146-161. H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

²⁰² William Chittick, ‘The School of Ibn ‘Arabi’ in Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy Part I* (London: Routledge, 1996) 510-23.

²⁰³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr explains that veils are deep rooted in human nature. Veils are human forgetfulness and imperfections. Only with God’s help may these veils be removed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007) 54. In order to unveil, Nasr asserts that human intellect, different from reason, is central. He calls his esoterism ‘sapiental esoterism that is based thoroughly upon the intellect and intellectual intuition.’ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ‘Reply to Huston Smith’ in Lewis E. Hahn, Randall E. Auxier and Lucian W. Stone, Jr. (eds.), *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000) 159-67, citing 163.

in the depths of their souls. Thus, Sufis strive towards aesthetic and spiritual perfection. Chittick explains the theoretical and practical levels of Sufi spirituality.

In order to reach human perfection, it is not enough to imitate others and follow religion blindly (*taqlid*). Rather, one must achieve a total awareness of the principles and the spirit that animate the religion, or, as the Sufis express it, one must realize the Reality itself (*tahaqqua*). On the theoretical level, the Shahadah²⁰⁴ becomes a concrete expression of the absolute reality of God, a sword that cuts away the illusory from the Real. On the practical level, the guidelines set down by the Sharia perform the same function, but here Sufis do not accept these guidelines “because they must,” but because of their awareness that these play a basic role in allowing human beings to act in accordance with revealed truth and avoid error.²⁰⁵

The Sufi spirituality emphasizes right thinking, right doing and above all right unveiling which is achieved by following the Sufi mystical path. Furthermore, the concept of bearing witness (*Shahadah*) with its realization of the absolute reality of God is closely linked and rooted in Ibn ‘Arabi’s tradition of the unity of existence.

This present work has found Chittick’s understanding of Sufi spirituality most helpful in interpreting Liu Zhi’s Sufi thought in his writings. Sufi thought in Liu Zhi’s works aims firstly to understand the Islamic texts better (right thinking). Secondly, rules and proprieties of Islam are carried out properly in compliance with *shari‘a* and yet expressed primarily in Confucian terms (right doing). Finally, right unveiling is understood as the return to the Real Ruler with great emphasis on the role of the prophet Muhammad who can empower Muslims in their right thinking and doing. Also, Liu Zhi consistently emphasized the important role of the heart in the return to the Real Ruler.

²⁰⁴ *Shahadah* means the testimony of faith or to bear witness. This testifies that firstly there is no god but God and secondly, Muhammad is his messenger. It is a key to understanding the Islamic perspectives in all domains of faith.

²⁰⁵ Chittick, *Sufism*, 15.

2.3.4 Liu Zhi's Sufi Spirituality as Contextualized Neo-Confucian Wisdom

(1) Neo-Confucianism and Zhu Xi (1130-1200)

The philosophical thought in 17th-century China approved by the imperial court was that of Zhu Xi (1130 – 1200) and his School of Principle. Zhu Xi was a consummate scholar and superbly brought to completion the ideas of many previous Confucian thinkers.²⁰⁶ He also edited and annotated essential Confucian texts, namely the *Analects of Confucius*.²⁰⁷ He worked out a lasting renewal of the Confucian project and launched thirteenth-century China into Neo-Confucianism. Zhu Xi's thought and his influence gradually diminished with the rise of Chinese scholars like Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692) who rejected both the Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming schools of Neo-Confucianism. In the early Qing dynasty, Wang Fuzhi attacked both principle (Zhu Xi) and mind (Wang Yangming) schools and asserted that these schools were mainly responsible for the downfall of the Ming dynasty into the hands of the Manchu invaders.

Zhu Xi's religious, cosmological and ethical teachings require exposition because many of Liu Zhi's modern interpreters have argued that Liu's teachings resonated with Zhu Xi's writings. Interpreters also have asserted that Liu Zhi's works borrowed heavily from Neo-Confucianism in general and Zhu Xi in particular. The key concepts of Zhu Xi's teachings that bear religious connotations are *taiji* (the Great Ultimate), *li* (principle) and *qi* (matter-energy or energizing field). Although it is still debatable whether Zhu Xi is a theist,²⁰⁸ this thesis asserts that he is not within the boundary of the monotheistic Semitic faiths. Zhu Xi's concept of the Great Ultimate was indebted to Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) who had written

²⁰⁶ Chan Wing-Tsit asserted that Zhu Xi was able to give Neo-Confucianism a new character and a new completion. Wing-Tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: Life and Thought* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1987) 104.

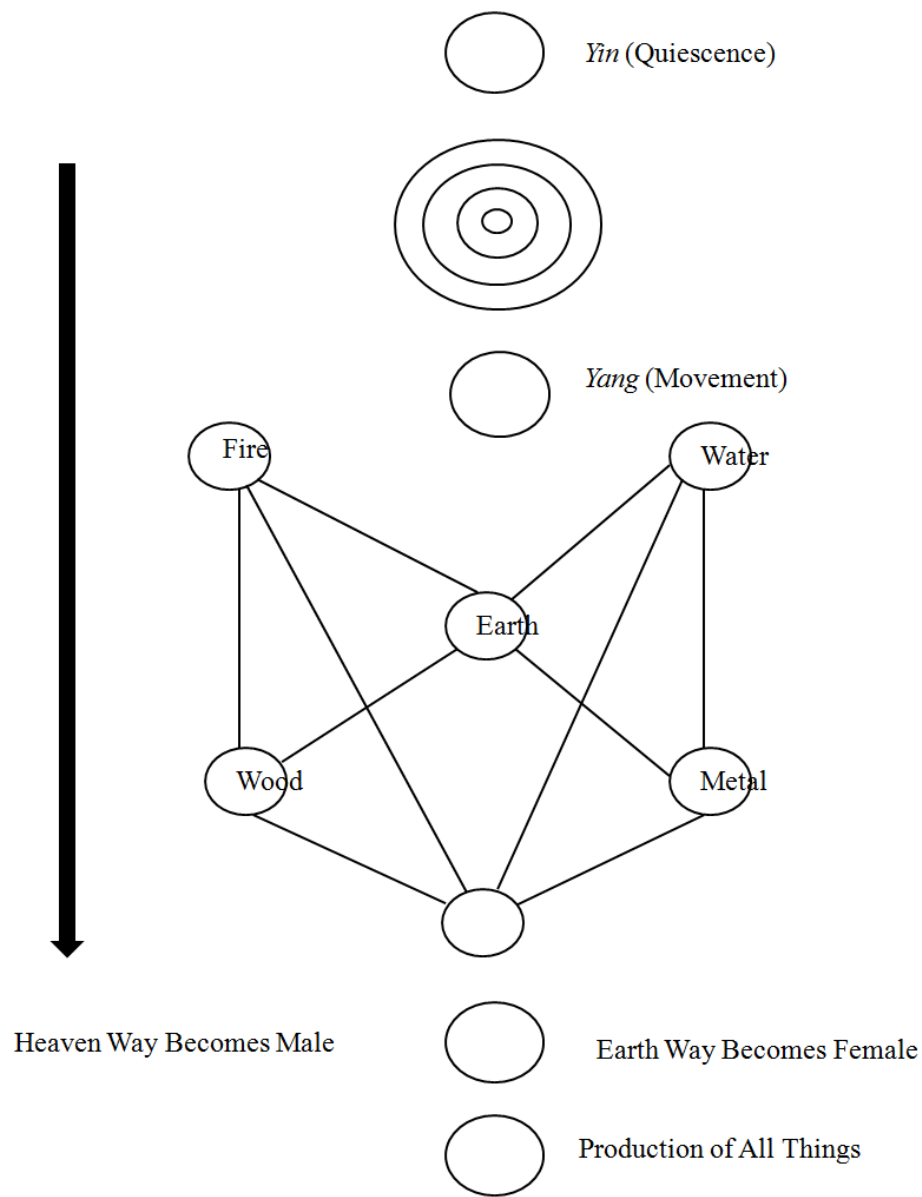
²⁰⁷ Zhu Xi who is a key scholar of Neo-Confucianism wrote his commentary of Confucius's *Analects* and interpreted Confucius in his own way. D. Gardner, *Zhu Xi's Reading of the "Analects": Canon, Commentary and the Classical Tradition* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2003).

²⁰⁸ Under the concept of God's creativity, John Berthrong takes the cue from Zhu Xi's thoughts to defend the object-event creative view of A. N. Whitehead and against Richard Neville's *creatio ex nihilo* view of God. See John Berthrong, *Concerning Creativity: A Comparison of Whitehead, Neville, and Chu Hsi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

and explained the diagram of the Great Ultimate or Infinite.²⁰⁹ Zhou supplied Zhu Xi with ideas, concepts, philosophical vocabulary and metaphysical formulations. As noted by the modern Chinese scholar Julia Ching, the ‘concept of the Great Ultimate (T’ai-chi [Taiji]) marks the climax of Chu’s [Zhu Xi] philosophical system ... The concept became famous especially with his own contributions, which transformed its meaning by relating it to *li* and *ch’i* [*qi* matter energy].’²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ For a brief introduction to his life and thought, see Liang Shaohui, *A Critical Biography of Zhou Dunyi* (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1994).

²¹⁰ Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 33.



Zhou Dunyi expounded the concept of Ultimate Non-being or Infinite in his diagram above, namely, the ‘Diagram of the Limitless or Infinite.’²¹¹ The diagram is to be interpreted from top to bottom. This diagram consists of a series of circles descending. The Ultimate Non-being transforms downward into interlocking, semicircular areas of light and darkness. This

²¹¹ This is also known as the diagram of Non Ultimate (*Wuji Tu* 無極圖). The alleged source of this diagram was from the Daoist hermit Chen Tuan (c. 906 – c. 989).

is *Yin* (quiescence) and *Yang* (movement). The movement and quiescence of the two bipolar sides further transmit downward to a network of five small circles, identified by water, fire, metal, wood and the centre as earth. Beneath this network is the creation of male and female and then at the bottom of the diagram is the production and transformation of all things.²¹² Zhou Dunyi did not explain the diagram as to how and why the Great Ultimate effused in such a manner.

Prior to the Great Ultimate, Zhu Xi posits the Ultimate of Nonbeing *Wuji*²¹³ which is explicated as ‘the operations of Heaven have neither sound nor smell’. The Ultimate of Nonbeing has neither physical form nor spatial restriction. It exists prior to creation and yet is not absent after the creation of all things. It is omniscient without any smell or sound. The subtlety of Zhu Xi as compared with his source ‘the Diagram of the Infinite’ was noted by a well-known Neo-Confucian scholar, Chan Wing-tsit:

He [Zhu Xi] also said, ‘What is called ‘Wu-chi erh T’ai-chi’ [Great Ultimate as the ultimate non-being] does not mean that on top of the Great Ultimate there is separately an Ultimate of Nonbeing. It merely says that the Great Ultimate is not a thing, as in the saying, ‘The operations of Heaven have neither sound nor smell.’ Again, he said, ‘What is called wu-chi [ultimate of nonbeing] is to bring out the wonder of its being soundless and odorless.’²¹⁴

Thus, the Great Ultimate is the first principle which is both a creative principle as well as an explanatory principle that leads to an ordering of creation. Julia Ching helpfully explains that

[B]y analogy, we might say the Great Ultimate is like God or necessary being in Thomas Aquinas’s system, that which subsists, in and of itself, without depending on others, while all other exists, in and of the Great Ultimate. But the analogy is imperfect, as the Great Ultimate is, on another level, immanent

²¹² Ching, *Religious Thought*, 20-21.

²¹³ In Chinese 無極

²¹⁴ Chan Wing-tsit, *Chu Hsi New Studies* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989) 145.

as well as transcendent. It is above all things and yet present in all things. It is above motion and rest and yet involved in a cyclical cosmic process. The dialectic goes on.²¹⁵

Zhu took insight from Zhou's explanation and elaborated that the Great Ultimate existed as opposed to others and in dialectical relationship with the *li* (principle) and *qi* (matter or vital energy). The basic dynamic is that there is no mixing and yet no separation of *li* principle and *qi* matter energy in that they are mutually transcendent and interpenetrated without fusion or reduction. While *li* and *qi* are dialectically related, Zhu Xi gives ontological and logical priority to *li* over *qi* in his philosophy.²¹⁶

This is a significant emphasis by Zhu. That is, *li* as a metaphysical concept serves as an organizing principle while *qi* serves as an actualizing principle. Chan Wing-Tsit expounds Zhu Xi's understanding and asserts that while *li* and *qi* are never separated, 'Chu Hsi [Zhu Xi] repeatedly said that there must be the principle [*li*] of thing before that thing can come into being.'²¹⁷ For Zhu Xi, the Great Ultimate is the most perfect *li* which may be defined as the excellent and supremely good normative principle (*tao-li*).²¹⁸

What is the relationship between the Great Ultimate and *li*? While the summation of the *li* of the universe as a whole is the Great Ultimate, the Great Ultimate is also immanent in the individual examples of each category of things. Zhu Xi said, 'with regard to heaven and earth in general, the Great Ultimate is in heaven and earth. And with regard to the myriad things in particular, the Great Ultimate is in every one of them too.'²¹⁹ In addition to cosmogony, the Great Ultimate also relates to humanity.

J. Ching explains concisely the subtle relationship between *li* and the Great Ultimate in terms of human cultivation. 'I think it may be useful to see the immanent Great Ultimate as the *fullness* of *li* in the nature of sages. In other words, the identity between the Great

²¹⁵ Ching, *Religious Thought*, 52.

²¹⁶ Ching, *Religious Thought*, 41.

²¹⁷ Chan Wing-Tsit, *Chu Hsi: Life and Thought* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984) 112-13.

²¹⁸ Ching, *Religious Thought*, 44.

²¹⁹ Fung, *Short History*, 488.

Ultimate and *li* in the nature of sages is not true of ordinary humans. It can, however, be made so by a process of cultivation. Therefore, its manifestation is also in terms of degrees, depending on the person's nearness to sagehood.'²²⁰ That is to say, there is one principle with many manifestations. This immanence appears latent in many people but can be manifested and actualized by self-cultivation.

In almost all recent studies of Liu Zhi, especially the contributions by the Chinese scholars, it has been argued that Neo-Confucianism in general and Zhu Xi in particular have influenced Liu Zhi. Later, this thesis will argue that while this Neo-Confucian background is important, Liu Zhi's Islamic work does not Confucianize or sinicize his Islamic message.

(2) The Relationship between Religion, Chinese Culture and Self-Cultivation

Confucianism and Buddhism are sometimes regarded as philosophical systems rather than religions. However, Christianity and Islam have always been regarded as religions. How is Chinese religion defined? It is often defined in broad and inclusive terms. Yao and Zhao define Chinese religion as referring 'to religious ideas, belief and practices of the Chinese people, which developed in history, are continually pursued and practised in today's personal and communal life, and have therefore become an important part of the Chinese way of life.'²²¹ Like many other Chinese scholars, Yao and Zhao assert that 'religion is part of culture and must be understood in its cultural context. Many Chinese beliefs and practices are phenomenologically meaningful only in relation to their cultural background and expectation.'²²² For Yao and Zhao, there is no need for a clear distinction between religious and cultural studies. 'In fact religion is part of culture, and culture is itself consolidated through religion ... place Chinese religion in its cultural contexts, and examine Chinese culture against its religious orientations.'²²³ Thus, cultural religion means

²²⁰ Ching, *Religious Thought*, 98.

²²¹ Yao and Zhao, *Chinese Religion*, ix.

²²² Yao and Zhao, *Chinese Religion*, x.

²²³ Yao and Zhao, *Chinese Religion*, 22.

a religious system that is ‘deeply woven into the broad fabric of individual, family and social life, and is an integral part of Chinese culture.’²²⁴ Religious culture means that ‘religion has influenced all aspects of daily life such as food, clothing, shelter, travel, marriage, birth, death and life crises. Historiography and philosophy are under the influence of religious interpretation.’²²⁵ It should be noted that Liu Zhi’s method of contextualization is to interpret Islamic spirituality creatively as a legitimate Chinese cultural religion because it fully complies with the spirit of Neo-Confucian culture and yet without any compromise with the basic tenets of Islamic belief.

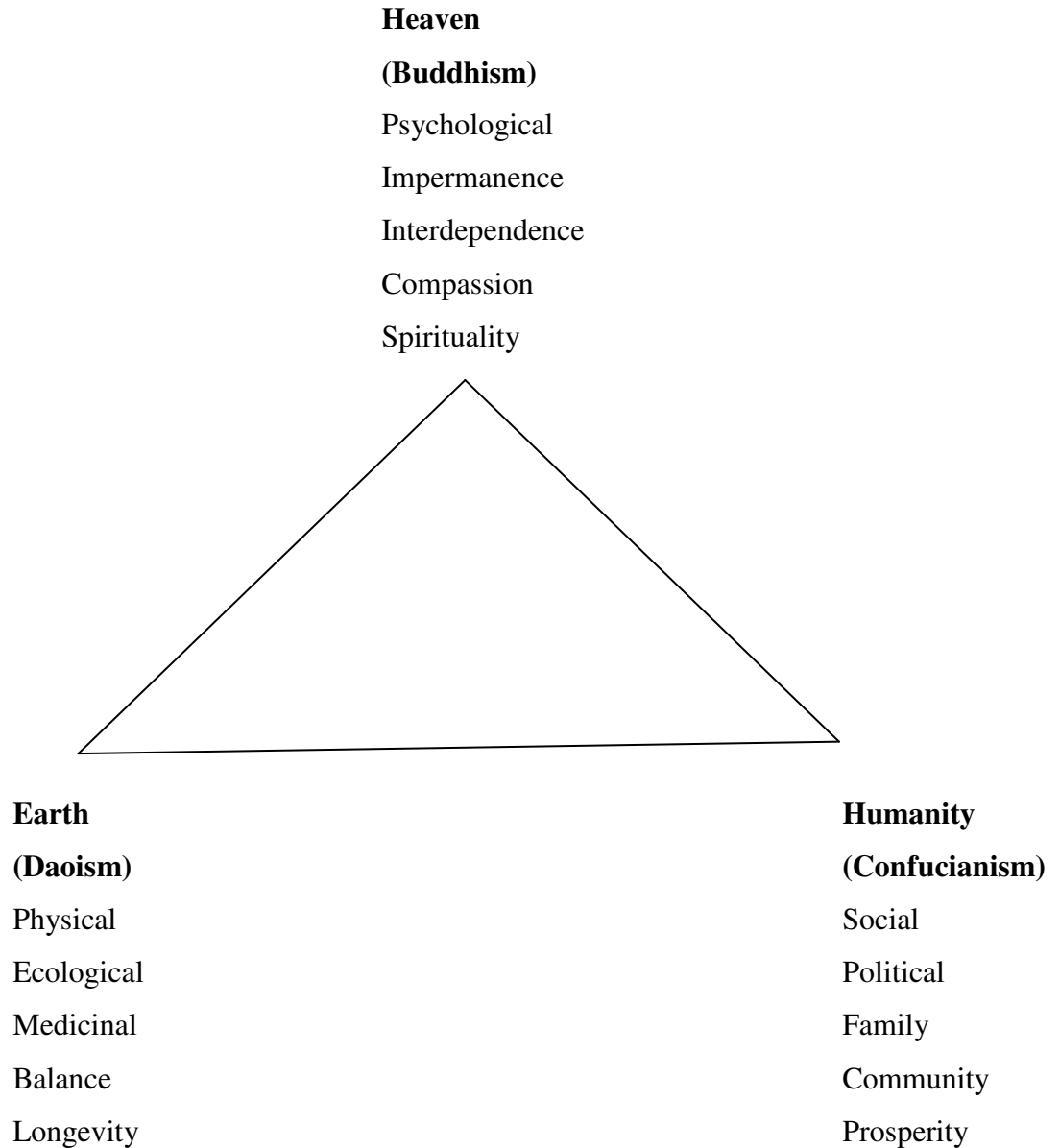
The Three Teachings, namely Neo-Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, have had far reaching practical implications in Chinese culture for many centuries. Paracka Jr. gives a simple diagram of the inter-related or triangulating relationships between the three philosophical systems.²²⁶ The diagram below also shows moral concerns and emphases of each of the Three Teachings.

²²⁴ Yao and Zhao, *Chinese Religion*, 79.

²²⁵ Yao and Zhao, *Chinese Religion*, 83.

²²⁶ Daniel J. Paracka Jr., ‘China’s Three Teachings and the Relationship of Heaven, Earth and Humanity,’ *Worldviews* 16 (2012) 77.

Triad of Interconnected Relationships



Generally speaking, 'Daoism focuses on living in harmony with the natural rhythms, flows and forces of life. Through careful observation, Daoists seek balance among alternating complementary and contrasting ideas such as night and day, masculine and feminine, yin

and yang.’²²⁷ For practising Daoists, longevity is about immortality or avoidance of the death-event. It ‘was to attain an exalted state of existence through diligent cultivation of the world’s deeper realities. Such attainments were generally predicated upon a process of personal purification and an enhanced awareness of reality.’²²⁸ ‘Buddhism focuses on how ignorance, greed and craving produce suffering in an interdependent world. It calls for compassion and understanding in order to build up *karma*,²²⁹ which may eventually lead to an end to one’s participation in the cycle of rebirth and suffering.’²³⁰

On a practical level, Neo-Confucianism focuses on harmonious relationships among people, in the state and even with the environment. Social order reinforced by rites and merits is understood to be the vital pre-requisite for peace and prosperity. Both Daoism and Buddhism encourage self-cultivation and the exemplar of moral cultivation is known as the perfect man²³¹ and holy sage respectively.

(3) Sufi Spirituality as Contextualized Neo-Confucian Wisdom

Neo-Confucian self-realization is occasionally known as practical wisdom. Wisdom and religion are closely related terms, but they do not mean the same thing. Religion is a loaded word often associated with powerful, greedy totalitarian regimes; sterile observance of rigid rules; and obsolete creeds filled with archaic terms that lack contemporary relevance. While wisdom may sound mystical to some, it is a word associated with the practice of human self-cultivation and transformation according to Confucian thought. As Kirill Thompson puts it, Confucius understood wisdom to be knowledge of the actual state of affairs. Thus, the wise person is able to penetrate obscurity and change to comprehend the hidden, true state of affairs. Thompson asserts that while Zhu Xi’s notions of knowledge and wisdom

²²⁷ Paracka Jr, ‘China’s Three Teachings,’ 75.

²²⁸ Russell Kirkland, *Taoism: the Enduring Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2004) 188.

²²⁹ Buddhism adopts the theory of reincarnation. ‘The deeds or *karma* of each sentient being in successive past existences determine what he is to be in existences still to come.’ Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 237.

²³⁰ Paracka Jr, ‘China’s Three Teachings,’ 75.

²³¹ Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 231-36.

were to inform life practice, Zhu's purpose in seeking and exercising wisdom was 'to cultivate a nuanced, holistic, responsive sensitivity to the immanent patterns of change and transformation.'²³² Yao Xinzong also asserts that Confucian wisdom is a 'progress from "what is below" to "what is above" and the interrelationship between knowing human nature, human destiny, and heaven . . . "higher realms" that are initially beyond the reach of ordinary people but can be fully realized in their effort to know, understand, and appreciate.'²³³ Furthermore, after exploring the concept of *Yi* (righteousness) in Confucius's *Analects*, Yu Jiyuan concludes that

While appropriateness [righteousness] is about practical affairs, wisdom seems to be both theoretical and practical. It is theoretical because it is knowledge of the *ming* [destiny] of heaven, the ontological premise of the good life; it is practical because at A. 12:22 . . . wisdom is to "know one's fellow human beings" . . . Wisdom is about what is appropriate [righteous] in human affairs . . . to have wisdom is to know the social rites and their ontological grounds, while appropriateness [righteousness] is more closely associated with the agent's choosing and determining.²³⁴

Clearly, wisdom in Neo-Confucian contexts has a minimal religious connotation but an extensive ethical-moral character. It can be acquired by practice and becomes a habitual attitude. Liu Zhi creatively contextualized Islamic proprieties as Neo-Confucian wisdom. The Qing emperor was convinced that Islam, like Buddhism and Daoism, had made contributions to the life of people in his country. So, Liu Zhi's Islam did not alienate itself from the imperial ruler.²³⁵ Liu Zhi's task of contextualization was not easy because he argued that one could be both a Muslim and a Chinese under an increasingly oppressive Qing imperial rule. On the one hand, he distinguished Islam and the Chinese culture by stating that Islam belonged to the wisdom of the west, founded by a western sage, the

²³² Kirill O. Thompson, 'The Archery of "Wisdom in the Stream of Life: Wisdom in the Four Books with Zhu Xi's Reflections,' *Philosophy East and West* 57 (2007) 336.

²³³ Yao Xinzong, 'From "What is Below" to "What is Above": A Confucian Discourse on Wisdom,' *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 33 (2006) 359-60.

²³⁴ Yu Jiyuan, 'Yi: Practical Wisdom in Confucius's *Analects*,' *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 33 (2006) 342.

²³⁵ Liu Zhi clearly taught that civilians and court officials should obey the imperial rule and be faithful to the emperor. The emperor should seek the well-being of the citizens because they are the basic units of the country. Liu Zhi 劉智, *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988) 130-34.

prophet Muhammad who received direct revelation from God. Thus, he separated Islam as a religion from Chinese social culture. On the other hand, he argued that Islamic belief and Chinese socio-religious culture were compatible.²³⁶ Thus, Islam witnessed to the richness of Chinese cultural traditions, especially self-realization and transformation. That is to say, the cultural religion of Islam as contextualized by Liu Zhi in the form of Confucian wisdom has enriched Neo-Confucianism into a multi-ethnic tradition.

Liu Zhi encouraged Muslims to be faithful witnesses of their faith and obedient to imperial rulers in their civil duty. They practised their Islamic faith in the midst of Han communities. They should express their Islamic faith in both Islamic and Chinese communities. Liu Zhi rejected totally the mentality of ‘us vs. them’. In addition, he also emphasized Sufi spirituality and taught Muslims to seek Sufi masters and follow the Sufi path. Sufi thought revitalized the faith of the individual beyond mere ritualistic observation of the proprieties of Islam. The strategy of Liu Zhi’s contextualization is ultimately to raise the legitimacy of Islam as a cultural religion in China in continuation with the Neo-Confucian tradition.

2.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provides the contexts in which Liu Zhi’s works can be better understood. He contextualized his Islamic message by triangulating the text, Chinese culture and wisdom. This means that Liu Zhi took the revealed texts and interpreted them in Neo-Confucian terms so that Hui Muslims would understand them meaningfully in their context. From that existential context, he encouraged all Hui Muslims to continue to live in the *dao* of Muhammad and eventually ascend or return to where the Real Ruler wants them in terms of Neo-Confucian wisdom. The table below provides a pointer to the following chapters in order to demonstrate the contextualization of Liu Zhi.

²³⁶ Any conflict between Islamic and traditional Neo-Confucian teachings is due to deviations and cults within Neo-Confucianism. Appendice III.ii.

Liu Zhi's Theme/ Philosophical Thoughts	Neo-Confucianism	Buddhism	Daoism
The Unity of Existence	The concept of Great Ultimate and cosmogony by using <i>yin/yang</i> thought	Attachment to permanence	Oneness of reality
Sufi Spirituality	Self-cultivation and the concept of holy sage	The escape from the wheel of rebirth and death and the concept of Buddhahood	Exalted state of existence and the concept of perfect man

The spread of Islam in the history of China is possibly due to a dynamic process of cultural, commercial, political, philosophical and religious factors. There is ample historical evidence to show that the 17th-18th century was a period of intense Islamic activity in China. This particular era was a period of vigorous Islamic activity of teaching, writings and translation. The leadership of some *ulama* determined to transmit the Islamic traditions which they had received. This chapter has examined the historical and religious context of Liu Zhi. He faced political, philosophical and religious challenges. His teachings and writings have brought forth the growth of Islam and had long-lasting effects in later generations.

This chapter of Liu Zhi's contexts has provided several pointers for the arguments in the following chapters:

1.0 In the concept of the unity of existence, Liu Zhi's interpretation and contextualization

of Islam has been aided by Daoism's oneness of reality and Neo-Confucianism's combination of *Yin/Yang* thought and the concept of Great Ultimate. Several previous studies have asserted Liu Zhi's contextualization is eclectic. However, this present work aims to show that Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence is primarily influenced by Neo-Confucian and secondarily Daoist influence.

2.0 In the concept of Sufi thought, Liu Zhi's exposition of *shari'a*-minded Sufism is to be proposed as right understanding, right thinking and right unveiling. Previous works have asserted that Liu Zhi's thoughts are influenced by Sufism. This present work is to point out that his Islamic rules and proprieties are understood as Sufi spirituality in terms of primarily Neo-Confucian self-cultivation and secondarily a Buddhist escape from impermanence and a Daoist exalted state of existence.

3.0 The role of the prophet Muhammad is vitally important for Muslims to return to the Real Ruler. Previous studies of Liu Zhi have said little about the role of the prophet Muhammad in Liu Zhi's Sufi thought. The role of the prophet is understood in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition and is contextualized as the Utmost Sage of the Neo-Confucian tradition.

Chapter Three: An Examination of Liu Zhi's Writings

This chapter provides an overview of the major and some minor works of Liu Zhi. The second part of this chapter introduces the contemporary discussion of Liu Zhi's works in Chinese and English. Finally, a discussion will be provided of contemporary scholarship on Liu Zhi's contextualization.

3.1 Liu Zhi's Trilogy: a Brief Overview

Jin asserts that the majority of Liu Zhi's writing is expositional and commentary work rather than translated work.²³⁷ Liu Zhi used Arabic or Persian source materials available in his time. Then, he translated these source materials into Chinese and explained them. He also composed Islamic poems in Chinese and tracts for easier memorization. While he wrote, he freely used and selectively edited his source materials. The literary structure and topic divisions were Liu Zhi's own creation. In addition, his commentary on each topic was his own exposition. More precisely, then, Liu Zhi's work should be described as a fairly free exposition of or commentary of selected Islamic traditions in China at the time of his writing. Undoubtedly, Liu Zhi's trilogy is by far the most significant. His trilogy is listed as follows:

- *The Nature and Principle in Islam*,
- *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*²³⁸ and
- *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*²³⁹

Liu Zhi explained the close relationship between his three books. *The Nature and Principle in Islam* explains the nature and principle of the Islamic *dao* i.e. the concept of God, the divine disclosure and the Islamic worldview. The *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* explains

²³⁷ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 16-17.

²³⁸ Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988). The first five chapters of this work have been translated into English in Appendice IV

²³⁹ Liu Zhi, *The True Record of Utmost Sage of Islam* (Beijing, China Islamic Association, 1984). Selected sections of this work have been translated into English in Appendice II.

the meaning of Islamic rituals. *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* explains the origin of Islam. He emphasized that these three works should actually constitute one whole grand meta-concept of Chinese Islam.

Other works include

- Sufi works: *the Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* and *An Explanation of the Arabic Alphabets*
- Translated work: *Displaying the Concealment of the True Realm*

His writings on the popular level are as follows:

- *The Three-character Classic* similar to *The Nature and Principle in Islam* in content but shorter and easier to read
- *The Explanation of the Five Endeavours* similar to *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* in content but shorter and easier to read

Liu Zhi's trilogy has often been re-printed with increasing prefaces by well known supporters/admirers throughout the past several centuries. The latest printing is published in modern and simplified Chinese for the contemporary readers. The more popular shorter works of Liu Zhi are often accessible from the internet.

3.1.1 The Nature and Principle in Islam

*The Nature and Principle in Islam*²⁴⁰ is the first of the trilogy by Liu Zhi. He stated that the aim of this work was to show the whole world the evidence of the way in its totality.²⁴¹ Literally, the way is the *dao*. Liu Zhi discussed the metaphysical concept of the *dao* of Chinese Islam. The work is broadly divided into two sections. The first section has just one

²⁴⁰ In Chinese 天方性理. Murata has translated this work into English. Murata, Sage, 102-580.

²⁴¹ In Chinese 示天下以證道之全體也.

volume with five chapters and is known as the root classic.²⁴² This comprises the solid and complicated concepts including the Great Ultimate, transformation of one into many, the innate and the acquired heaven and return to the Real One. The second section takes up the major bulk of the book. This section has five volumes. Each volume in the second section explains in detail each corresponding chapter in the first section. In total, sixty diagrams are added into the second section to aid the explanation. Readers are expected to examine the diagram while reading the text to assist their understanding.

The core teaching of the work is the multiplicity and unity of God. From this foundational concept, Liu Zhi expounded various doctrines of ontology, epistemology, cosmology and anthropology. Liu Zhi also briefly mentioned the uniqueness of the prophet Muhammad. Muhammad had a pre-creation metaphysical existence. He was the archetypal human example that all Chinese Muslims should follow. Liu Zhi's contemporary, Wang Daiyu regarded Muhammad embracing 'in unitary fashion all the realities and principles that give rise to the infinitely diverse universe. Thus the Muhammadan Reality is God inasmuch as human beings are created in his image.'²⁴³ This work has been extensively studied and many essays in journals and a few book-length studies have been published in both English and Chinese. Murata also gives a reliable and full English-Chinese translation of the first five volumes or the root classic which is the foundational material of this work.²⁴⁴

3.1.2 The Rules and Proprieties of Islam²⁴⁵

The second work in the trilogy is *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* that teaches the rationale and various religious practices of Islam. It consists of 20 volumes. The first 4 volumes recapitulate the Islamic philosophy including the concept of God, knowing God

²⁴² This is the foundational section of the whole work and known as the 'root classic' (*Benjing* 本經). The first chapter summarizes the whole root classic. The subsequent section serves to expound the meaning of the root classic. Murata, *Sage*, 82-84.

²⁴³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 75-76.

²⁴⁴ Murata, *Sage*, 93-152.

²⁴⁵ Liu Zhi 劉智, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988).

and Islamic worldview. These few chapters recapitulate the main teaching of root classic in *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. The fifth to the tenth volumes give an account of the five meritorious works or endeavours. The rest of the book is concerned with religious and ethical practices and rites. This book was selected and collected into the *Annotated General Catalogue of the Compendium of the Four Treasuries, Authorized by the Emperor*.²⁴⁶ Such inclusion into the imperial catalogue has raised Liu Zhi's literary work to national status beyond the ethnic status of the *Han Kitab*. It is the only work in the *Han Kitab* to have achieved such imperial status. The first five volumes or more commonly known chapters will be translated and discussed in greater detail in the sixth chapter of this present study.

3.1.3 *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*

The third and last major work is *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*²⁴⁷ in which Liu Zhi gave a fairly comprehensive account of the life history of the prophet Muhammad.²⁴⁸ Liu Zhi's purpose in writing is to explain the profound origins of Islam and its teaching. Liu Zhi's portrayal of the prophet came close to divinizing the prophet. This biographical work of Muhammad has been the most popular work by Liu Zhi. These three works form the trilogy and can be regarded as the *magnum opus* of his writings. *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* was translated into English in the early 20th century. In the first half of the twentieth century, the English version was translated into Russian and French. In 1941, the Chinese version was translated into Japanese.

In Isaac Mason's edited translation of Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, Mason translated only sixteen volumes. He followed closely the original Chinese text in the

²⁴⁶ Chi Hsiao-la (ed.) et al., *Annotated General Catalogue of the Compendium of the Four Treasuries, Authorized by the Emperor* 四庫全書 (Taipei: Commercial Press Reprint, 1971).

²⁴⁷ Liu, Zhi 劉智, *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* 天方至聖實錄 (Beijing, China Islamic Association, 1984). Selected texts of this work have been translated into English in Appendix II

²⁴⁸ Both S. Murata and D. Leslie have discussed briefly the source of this work. Leslie asserts that the original work is the fourteenth-century Persian work, *Tarjama-yi mawlud-i Mustafa* by 'Afif ibn Muhammad Kaziruni. Murata says that Liu Zhi's work 'retells many of the stories in 'Afif's work and follows the same general order, he also condenses the text drastically and adds material from other sources.' Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 34.

beginning. By the seventh volume, he became increasingly selective because he found the account tedious and 'omitted somewhat irrelevant portions to keep the book within moderate limits.'²⁴⁹

A typical version of *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* in traditional Chinese contains sixteen volumes with four additional volumes which are really appendices. In 1984, a simplified Chinese version was printed. It also has twenty volumes. The preface gives an account of different ways of presenting the prophet, namely portraits, books and others. The first volume narrates the ancestral records of Muhammad, namely fifty generations in total from Adam the first human being to the prophet Muhammad. The second volume explains the various traditions that Muhammad inherited from or belonged to, namely the tradition of human ancestry, nation, prophet and human nature. The third volume gives a concise summary of major events in the life of the prophet. These few introductory volumes are important because Liu Zhi put the prophet and Islam at the centre of human existence including history and religion. In addition, he could also claim legitimacy for Islam in the Chinese culture and orthodoxy in all other religions.

From the fourth volume to the sixteenth volume, Liu Zhi gave a fairly comprehensive record of the life of the prophet Muhammad from his birth to death. The seventeenth volume was originally written by Ma Zhu in accordance with the Chinese Sufi tradition. Liu Zhi's comments keenly supported Ma's understanding of the role of the prophet. The commentary is about the eulogizing of Muhammad and Liu Zhi added this extra volume to complete his account of the life and role of the prophet in Islam. The eighteenth volume gives a record of the appearance, worship, fasting and other aspects of the prophet's life and his way of dealing with various human relationships. Extra information about the land of the origin of Islam is provided in the nineteenth volume.

While some Western scholars showed keen interest in this work in the first half of the twentieth century, recent research of Liu Zhi in both China and the West has paid little

²⁴⁹ Mason, *The Arabian Prophet*, viii.

attention to this last work of Liu Zhi's trilogy. In 1995, a paraphrased version was printed in modern simplified Chinese in China. Interestingly, this latest version deletes all the beginning prefaces, three introductory volumes and additional four volumes of appendices at the end and solely narrates the life history of the utmost sage according to Liu Zhi.

3.2 Other Works of Liu Zhi: An Overview

3.2.1 *The Explanation of the Five Endeavours*

This is not a long work, about 14,000 Chinese words. It is also known as *The Book of Propriety: the Explanation of the Five Endeavours*.²⁵⁰ It explains the five pillars of Islam in Neo-Confucian terms. It consists of 63 short chapters, equivalent to 63 years of the age of the prophet Muhammad. It is divided into three sections. The first seven chapters explicate the origin, basics and goals of the five endeavours. The second section covers from the eighth to the thirty-second chapter and explains the meanings and the regulations of such endeavours. The final section covers chapters from the thirty-third to sixty-third. It explains in details the meanings of endeavour from a religious and ethical perspective. The length of such chapters may vary from a short chapter under 20 Chinese words (for example, forty-third chapter) to the longest thirty-third chapter about 420 words. Each chapter begins with a chapter title. This work is a valuable, easy to read and concise summary of Liu Zhi's understanding and contextualization of the proprieties of Islam in Neo-Confucian terms.

In the first section, the first chapter affirms that the origin of the five endeavours is based on the unity of existence and Islamic worldview in accordance with Liu Zhi's received Islamic tradition. The goal of Muslims is to recover the mandate and return to the Real. Return is the end of the spiritual way. The second chapter covers more basic doctrines of the proprieties. This is followed consecutively by chapters of love and hatred, external sensory organs, inner virtues, nature of the heart and lastly the seventh chapter of uprightness and distortion.

²⁵⁰ 禮書五功釋義.

The second section teaches the rite, method, meaning, principle and ultimate goal of the five endeavours, namely bearing witness (*shahadah*), ritual prayer (*salat*), fasting, alms tax and pilgrimage.

The last section provides more detailed meaning and explanation from religious and ethical perspectives. It should be noted that Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* covers similar teachings to the *Explanation of the Five Endeavours*. Compared to his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, three particular points are more explicit in the third section of this shorter work. Firstly, this third section emphasizes that the five endeavours are spiritual progress (in the fifty-eighth chapter) and yet this progress is ongoing in a cyclic manner and never coming to an end (in the forty-fourth chapter). Secondly, the benefits of the five endeavours (in the forty-second, forty-third, forty-fifth and fifty-first chapters) have both real physical and spiritual well being. Lastly in the fiftieth chapter, the Utmost Sage, namely the prophet Muhammad, is unique. His endeavours are most subtle and he can see through the principle and image of things.

3.2.2 Other Works: the Three-character Classic, Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm, Explanation of the Meaning of Arabic Alphabets and Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon

The teaching on the unity of existence and divine disclosure is clearly found in *The Three-character Classic* and *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*. Both of these works will be discussed in the next chapter.

There is no reason to doubt Liu Zhi's competence to understand the Qur'an in Arabic. His knowledge of Arabic could be partly demonstrated by his work, *An Explanation of the Meaning of Islamic Letters*.²⁵¹ It should be noted that this is not a grammatical introduction to the Arabic language. In this work, Liu Zhi explained the theological meaning of the

²⁵¹ Liu Zhi, 天方字母解義 *Explanation of the Meaning of Arabic Alphabets*, N.P. (ca. 1704).

Arabic alphabets within the framework of his cosmogony as expounded in his *Nature and Principle in Islam* from the perspective of Sufi mysticism. With regard to the explanation of the Arabic alphabets, Liu Zhi acknowledged his indebtedness to previous sources, namely, *Subtle Analogy Classic* (妙喻經) and *Alphabet Classic* (字母經). According to Jin, Liu Zhi employed more Neo-Confucian concepts than any other Muslim literati.²⁵² Jin asserts that Liu Zhi's contemporary Xu Lan (藍煦) in his work *The Proper Meaning of Islam* 天方正學, also explained the meaning of the Arabic alphabets. While Liu Zhi was indebted to his sources, he differed from Xu Lan's interpretation. Xu Lan affirmed that the dot of the Arabic alphabet was identical to the Real One. However, Liu Zhi asserted that the dot represented the substance (*ti* 體).²⁵³

Liu Zhi explained that the dot was the origin of all Arabic alphabets. These alphabets come into existence by the disclosure of the dot. The process of disclosure is understood mystically in accordance with mystical Sufism.²⁵⁴ He argued that from each dot of the alphabet, emanated something similar to the self-disclosure of the Real Being. The shape of the alphabet was the beginning of the word. The word was the manifestation of both dot and shape. Thus, Liu Zhi argued that an essay was a multiple manifestation of words and the word was a multiple manifestation of both dot and shape of each alphabet.²⁵⁵ Jin Yijiu notes that for Liu Zhi, the Arabic word for Muhammad could be analyzed and deduced that he was the perfect man in the disclosure.²⁵⁶ This work clearly demonstrates Liu Zhi's Sufi thoughts.

The other Sufi work is *The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon*. It will be fully translated into English and discussed in the fifth chapter of this thesis.²⁵⁷ The poem is still very popular among Hui Muslims and easily accessible on the internet. While many

²⁵² Jin Yijiu, '劉智的天方字母解義 Liu Zhi's Explanation of the Meaning of Arabic Alphabets,' *Studies of the Arabic World* Issue 4 (1996) 22-29, citing 28-29.

²⁵³ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 302.

²⁵⁴ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 314.

²⁵⁵ Jin, 'Liu Zhi's Explanation of the Meaning', 26-27.

²⁵⁶ Jin, 'Liu Zhi's Explanation of the Meaning', 27.

²⁵⁷ The full English translation is found in Appendice I.

scholars are able to point out that *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is quite Confucianized, only Jin briefly states that the *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* is very eclectic with frequent use of Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian terms.²⁵⁸

3.3 Contemporary Scholarship on Liu Zhi's Works and a Critical Assessment

3.3.1 An Overview

(1) Works in English

Before the critical assessment of contemporary scholarship, it is appropriate to give a historical survey of research by both English and Chinese scholars. The last few decades have witnessed intense scholarly study of 17th and 18th-century Chinese Islam in general and Liu Zhi in particular. Certainly, the scholarly interest will continue throughout this century as China continues to seek political friendship and trading opportunities with the Western and especially Middle Eastern Arabic countries. However, the relationship between China and other countries a century ago was totally different. Owing to missionary endeavours at the beginning of the 20th century, missionaries anticipated an open door opportunity to Muslims in China. To facilitate such Christian mission, Marshall Broomhall wrote a scholarly work on Islam in China.²⁵⁹ In addition to a book-length work, other essays were published promoting a better understanding of the neglected people, Hui and Uyghurs and other Muslims in China. Isaac Mason wrote several important essays. Relevant to this thesis is his abridged translation of Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Jin gives a brief note of various Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian terms in *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon*. Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 298.

²⁵⁹ Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: a Neglected Problem* (New York: Paragon Book Co., 1910).

²⁶⁰ Isaac Mason, *The Arabian Prophet: A Life of Mohammed from Chinese and Arabic Sources* (Shanghai: Commercial Press Ltd., 1921). Also, Isaac Mason, 'Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature,' *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 56 (1925) 172-215.

Interest in Chinese Islam went through a quiet period from 1949, when the communists came to power, with the founding of the People Republic of China. Then, most of the research, translation and publication work of Chinese Islam continued outside the Peoples' Republic of China, namely, in Taiwan,²⁶¹ Australia,²⁶² Japan and other Southeast Asian countries, Europe²⁶³ and America. In 1974, J.F. Ford's historical study of Chinese Islam focused on the Chinese Muslim literati including Liu Zhi in the 17th and 18th centuries.²⁶⁴ In the 1980s, fuelled by the open-door policy of the Chinese government, study of Chinese Islam in general and 17th-century Chinese Islam in particular resumed momentum. F. Cotter and L. Reichelt translated into English in the early 20th century Liu Zhi's *The Three-character Classic*.²⁶⁵ Donald Leslie began his life-long work in the late '70s on historical study of Chinese Islam, often paying particular attention to 17th-century *Han Kitab* work by the Chinese Muslim literati.²⁶⁶ Most relevant to this thesis is his joint work with M. Wassel. They trace the various Islamic sources that Liu Zhi used and are able to identify most of the sources as Arabic and Persian. They conclude that Liu Zhi had diverse Islamic sources as follows:

²⁶¹ During this period, some classics of 17th-century Islamic literature in Chinese were published in more modern Chinese in Taiwan.

²⁶² The Australian National University has made tremendous advances in historical Chinese studies of both Jews and Islam, under the leadership of Donald Leslie.

²⁶³ Russians have occasionally shown their interest in historical study on Chinese Islam. Rudolf Loewenthal, 'Russian Materials on Islam in China: A Preliminary Bibliography,' *Monumenta Serica* 16 (1957) 449-479. Rudolf Loewenthal, 'Sino-Islamica: Bibliographical Notes of the Chinese Muslims,' *Monumenta Serica* 22 (1963) 209-212.

²⁶⁴ J.F. Ford, 'Some Chinese Muslims of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' *Asian Affairs* 61 (1974) 144-56.

²⁶⁵ F.J.M. Cotter and L. Reichelt (trans.), 'The Three Character Classic for Moslems by Lieo Kai Lien of Nanking,' *Moslem World* 8 (1981) 10-15. Liu Zhi's original work was a tract which can be rhymed for easy and quick grasp of Islam. Each phrase of the tract consisted of three Chinese characters, covering a very broad spectrum of subjects from creation, the Koran, the five virtues and worship to the unique position of the prophet Muhammad. Liu Zhi's work in Chinese was published in 1704.

²⁶⁶ Donald Leslie, 'Islam in China to 1800: A Bibliographical Guide,' *Abr Nahrain* 16 (1976) 16-48; Donald Leslie and Ludmilla Panskaya, *Introduction to Palladi's Chinese Literature of the Muslims* (Canberra: Australian National Press, 1977); Donald Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese, Late Ming and Early Ch'ing* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1981); Donald Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986); Donald Leslie, *The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: the Case of Chinese Muslims* (Canberra: George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology, No. 59, 1998). Donald Leslie, Daye Yang and Ahmed Youssef, 'Arabic Works Presented to Qianlong Emperor in 1782,' *Central Asiatic Journal* 45 (2000) 7-27; Donald Leslie, Daye Yang and Ahmed Youssef, *Islam in Traditional China: a Bibliographical Guide* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Monograph Series LIV, 2006).

- 1.0 Most of the texts in Arabic are standard Sunni Hanafite texts of law and ritual.
- 2.0 Many works in Persian are Sufi. The influence of the Naqshabandiyya and Kubrawiyya orders is significant.
- 3.0 There are more works in Persian than in Arabic. Most of the works are extant in the West.
- 4.0 Possibly, the sources are primarily from Central Asian Muslim sources and secondarily Persians and lastly original Arabic sources.²⁶⁷

A ground-breaking study on 17th and 18th-century Chinese Muslims comes from a Japanese scholar who studied Persian Islam, now teaching in America, Sachiko Murata. Her work on Wang Daiyu's *Great Learning of the Pure and Real* and Liu Zhi's *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* is the first ever English language book-length study and is recognized as the standard work for all subsequent historical study.²⁶⁸ She is undertaking more translation of Liu Zhi's writings.²⁶⁹ Admittedly, she is the most able contemporary interpreter of Liu Zhi's Islamic philosophy and Sufism in the West. Her most recent work on Liu Zhi is *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms*.²⁷⁰ Another book-length study was published in America by Zvi Ben-Dor Benite in 2005.²⁷¹ Benite admirably notes the cultural history of Islam within the educational network in late imperial China, paying attention to the Chinese Muslim literati and the Chinese Islamic school in Nanjing. A recent PhD thesis focusing solely on Liu Zhi was done by another American, James Frankel, in 2005.²⁷² He has studied Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Later, Frankel published his research.²⁷³ In America, a recent thesis has been done

²⁶⁷ Donald Leslie and Mohamed Wassel, 'Arabic and Persian Sources used by Liu Chih,' *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982) 78-104.

²⁶⁸ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*. All book reviewers conclude that Murata has provided the Western world with a foundational work in English on 17th-century study of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi.

²⁶⁹ Sachiko Murata, 'The Unity of Being in Liu Chih's Islamic Neoconfucianism,' *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 36 (2004); Sachiko Murata, 'The Creative Transformation in Liu Chih's Philosophy of Islam,' in A-T Tymieniecka (ed.) *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology on the Perennial Issue of Microcosm and Macrocosm* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006) 141-148.

²⁷⁰ Murata, *Sage*.

²⁷¹ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*.

²⁷² Frankel, *Liu Zhi's Journey*.

²⁷³ James D. Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name: Liu Zhi's Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011).

on Wang Daiyu by Kristian Petersen.²⁷⁴ Apart from the Americans, a few works on Liu Zhi's Chinese Islam come from Western Europe. One notable inclusion is the German, Barbara Stöcker-Parnian, who studied the Scripture Hall Education System in 17th to 19th-century China, paying brief attention to various Chinese Muslim literati including Liu Zhi.²⁷⁵ It should be noted that Europeans, Americans, Australian and Japanese have made great advances in academic scholarship in the fields of historical, cultural, ethnic, comparative social and social science study on the Hui and Uyghurs.²⁷⁶ However, these studies have only indirect relevance to this present research apart from the works of Murata and Frankel.

(2) *Works in Chinese*

While the scholarship of Islam in China in the West has made gradual progress throughout the last century, the scholarship of Islam in China by Chinese scholars in Chinese has made rapid progress especially during the last few decades. From the People's Republic of China, the last twenty years have witnessed a flood of book-length studies and numerous essays on Islam in China and also on general comparative study between 17th- and 18th-century Islam and Neo-Confucianism in Chinese. Sadly, the Chinese scholars do not usually interact with the published works of Western scholars and there has been little sign of constructive dialogues. Only a few of Murata's formerly published essays in English are translated and published in Chinese and have appeared in a few Chinese journals. This present work

²⁷⁴ Kristian Petersen, 'The Heart of the Islamic-Chinese Dialogue: Wang Daiyu and the Creation of a Chinese Muslim Discourse' (MA thesis, Boulder: University of Colorado, 2006).

²⁷⁵ Barbara Stöcker-Parnian, *Jingtang Jiaoyu – die Bücherhallen Erziehung* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003).

²⁷⁶ A few prominent names may be mentioned. Joseph Fletcher, *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia* (London: Variorum, 1995); Raphael Israeli, *Muslims in China* (London: Curzon, 1978); Dru Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Dru Gladney, *Dislocating China* (London: Hurst & Co, 2004); Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Far Northwest* (London: Curzon, 2003); Élisabeth Allès, *Musulmans de Chine: Une Anthropologie des Hui du Henan* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2000); David Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

makes contributions by introducing recent scholarship of Liu Zhi's works in Chinese into the English world.

The most substantial overview on Liu Zhi's Islam is carried out by the prolific writer Jin Yijiu in Chinese. In 1999, he published a book-length study on Liu Zhi's overall Islamic faith and practice, including an introductory study on Liu Zhi's Sufi teaching.²⁷⁷ This is a classic and has become a foundational textbook for all subsequent study of Liu Zhi in Chinese. The second book-length study was written by Sha Zhongpin in 2004. He differs from Jin by narrowing his study to Liu Zhi's doctrine of God and humanity.²⁷⁸ The third book-length study was done by Liang Xiangming and he wrote a general study on Liu Zhi's Islamic teachings in 2004.²⁷⁹ His account of Liu Zhi follows Jin's textbook but he is not as articulate and comprehensive as Jin Yijiu. While Jin focuses more on Liu Zhi's philosophy, Liang focuses more on Liu Zhi's Islamic rules and proprieties. While Jin has continued to publish works on Liu Zhi, both Sha and Liang have diversified their research interests into other aspects of Islam in China.

Apart from research works which focus on Liu Zhi alone, there have been other works that discuss several Muslim literati during that period of Islam in China. Two more book-length studies were published in 2006, namely by Sun Zhenyu and Liu Yihong. Sun's work covers only three Muslim literati. They are the well-known Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi and Ma Dexin. While Sun's work is descriptive of each Muslim literatus, Liu Yihong examines the dialogue between Neo-Confucianism and Islam in the work of each Muslim literatus. Liu's work selects five Muslim literati. They are Wang Daiyu, Wu Zunqi (伍遵契, c.1598 – c.1698), Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi and Ma Dexin. Both studies have focused on some key thinkers during this important period of Islam in China.

Other recent and substantial book-length works related to this present study were carried out by Wang Junrong (王俊榮) in 2006 and the prolific Liu Zhi scholar Jin in 2012.

²⁷⁷ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 283-324.

²⁷⁸ Sha, *Chinese Islam*.

²⁷⁹ Liang Xiangming, *A Study of Liu Zhi and His Islamic Thought* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University, 2004).

Wang's work discusses the ontology of Ibn 'Arabi.²⁸⁰ Her work makes occasional references to Sufi thought in China and the works of Jin on Liu Zhi. She also introduces briefly the dialogue on Ibn 'Arabi's ontology between the Ibn 'Arabi tradition and the Islam in China. The prolific writer Jin continues to make unique contribution to Islam in China by publishing a substantial work on Sufism in China, giving a very comprehensive account of its history and teaching including the development of the Scripture Hall Education System.²⁸¹ He discusses various aspects of Chinese Sufism within the context of the Scripture Hall Education System and the emergent development of *Han Kitab* from the 16th-century China.

In addition, many academic essays in Chinese on Liu Zhi's works have appeared in periodicals and journals in different parts of China during the last twenty years. The key scholars are Jin, Sha and Liang. In addition, other Chinese scholars have written on various aspects of Liu Zhi's works. One can safely say that academic study on Liu Zhi's works has come to a new stage of research. The recent secondary literature of the work of Liu Zhi in Chinese can be grouped under the study of sources, various influences, ontology and worldview, rites of Islam and the most popular topic, namely the relationship between Liu Zhi's Islam and Neo-Confucianism. This may be broadly classified as follows:

- The identification of the Persian and Arabic sources of Liu Zhi's works.²⁸²
- Greek and other philosophical influences upon Liu Zhi.²⁸³
- Comparison between Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism and Liu Zhi's Neo-Confucianism.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ Wang Junrong 王俊榮, *The Unity of Heaven and Man, the Return of Material Beings to Reality: Exploring the Ontology of Ibn 'Arabi* 天人合一, 物我還真 (Beijing, Religion and Culture Publishing Press 宗教文化出版社, 2006).

²⁸¹ Jin Yijiu, *Sufism in China* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2012).

²⁸² One example of such a study is by Wang Genping 王根平, 'An Explanation and Comments on the Arabic Sources in Liu Zhi's Works 劉智著作參閱的阿拉伯文文獻考釋及其研究評述,' *N.W. Ethno-National Studies* 56 (2008) 37-47.

²⁸³ The most common influence is Neo-Platonism upon Chinese Sufi teaching. See Jin, Yijiu, 'On the Idea of the Divine Light in the Early Writings in Chinese 論漢文伊斯蘭教早期著述中的神光思想,' *Studies in World Religions* 22 (1985) 1 -11.

²⁸⁴ Alimu Tuoheti, 'A Study of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhiyu's Concept of the Universe 朱子學本體思想範疇的中介化過程,' *Journal of Yunnan Nationalities University (Social Sciences)* 27.6 (2010) 105-08.

- Comparison of the Islamic concepts used by Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi and of their use of Confucian terms.²⁸⁵
- Comparison of the ethical and moral teachings between Liu Zhi's rites of Islam and Neo-Confucian self-cultivation and spiritual wisdom.²⁸⁶
- The Confucianization or sinicization²⁸⁷ of Liu Zhi's Islam and Chinese culture.²⁸⁸

It can be noted from the above brief historical account of the study of Liu Zhi that firstly, compared to the recent study of the works of Liu Zhi in English, the study of Liu Zhi in Chinese has covered a wider scope of interests. Secondly, the Chinese scholars have a keen interest in comparative study between Liu Zhi's Islam and Chinese culture. Finally, little study has been made by scholars in both English and Chinese on Liu Zhi's Sufi thought and in particular the role of the prophet Muhammad in Liu Zhi's overall teaching. Part of the reason may be due to the fact that Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* has not recently received much serious academic interest.

3.3.2 Discussion of Liu Zhi's Works by Scholars in English and Chinese

(1) Works in English

The three main scholars of the works of Liu Zhi in English are Sachiko Murata, James Frankel and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite. However, their research on Liu Zhi's works is diverse and there is little room for debate between them in their published works. Benite's work is a cultural study and he has not studied any of Liu Zhi's works specifically in detail but he pays sufficient attention to Liu Zhi. Frankel studies specifically a part of Liu Zhi's *Rules*

²⁸⁵ Sun, Zhenyu 孫振玉, *王岱輿 劉智評傳 A Critical Biography of Wang Dai Yu, Liu Zhi* (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2006).

²⁸⁶ Ji Fangtong 季芳桐, 'A Comparative Study between Islam and Confucianism on Ethics of Moral Sanctity 回儒修養理論比較 — 以清初回族思想家劉智天方性理為考察點,' *N.W. Ethno-National Studies* 46 (2005) 134-42.

²⁸⁷ Sinicization of Chinese Muslims may be defined simply as 'the acculturation, the penetration of Han culture into the Hui's everyday life.' Jean A. Berlie, *Islam in China* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2004) 8.

²⁸⁸ Cai Degui 蔡德貴, 'the Adaptation of Liu Zhi's Islamic Philosophy into the Chinese Traditional Philosophy 劉智對伊斯蘭教哲學和中國傳統哲學的融合,' *History of Chinese Philosophy* 1 (1997) 108-15.

and Proprieties of Islam from the perspective of comparative religion. Murata's main focus is on Liu Zhi's theosophy, cosmogony and worldview in *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. She gives great insight in explaining the Islamic concept behind Liu Zhi's Confucian terms.

Zvi Ben-Dor Benite²⁸⁹ produces an admirable study based on a primary source²⁹⁰ on the cultural history of Muslims in late imperial China. His study is firstly to establish various networks, based on Islamic educational movements involving thousands of people between the mid-sixteenth and eighteenth century. Benite also links the network of Ma Zhu²⁹¹ born in Yunnan (ca. 1620) with Liu Zhi's father,²⁹² Liu Sanjie who wrote the preface in Ma Zhu's work.²⁹³ It should be noted that Liu Sanjie was a teacher in the Yuan school in Nanjing, led by Yuan Ruqi.²⁹⁴ Benite believes that the emerging and flourishing Hui Muslim literary work was not due to accommodation of Islam to Chinese culture. Rather, these scholars presented their scholarship out of the context of their educational networks. Thus, Benite argues that Chinese Muslim scholarship in the 17th century must be studied and understood 'against the backdrop of broad Chinese intellectual trends and within the context of their intellectual networks, educational system, lineage, and pedagogy...'²⁹⁵ He also insists that the Muslim school 'has as its starting point a filiation in Islam but insists that Islam be viewed through the lenses of dominant Chinese cultural categories.'²⁹⁶ Benite's work has established the significance of any 17th-century Hui Muslim literary work within the well-established intellectual networks and education system. Secondly,

²⁸⁹ Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*.

²⁹⁰ The primary source is known as the *Register of Lineage and Transmission of Classical Learning*. It is named by Benite as genealogy 經學系傳譜, authored by Zhao Can 趙燦 before 1697, consisting of 26 chapters and three appendices, covering 150 years between 1550 and 1700. It is a study of various networks with biographical details for some teachers and scholars. Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 30-31. Another source is Yuan Guozuo's 袁國做 (b. 1717) bibliography, namely, *An Introduction of Collected Islamic Books in 1780*. See Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 155. Yuan also published Liu Zhi's books. Yuan undertook the task of compiling a bibliography of Muslim Chinese books written up to his time. In addition, he also provided biographical information on these authors and the network, i.e. teachers and students or intellectual relationships. See, Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 27; 154-159. Both Liu Zhi and his father Sanjie belonged to the Yuan's network.

²⁹¹ Chinese name 馬注.

²⁹² Chinese name 劉三傑.

²⁹³ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 28.

²⁹⁴ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 145.

²⁹⁵ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 123. Certainly, the religious and political contexts should not be ignored.

²⁹⁶ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 125.

Benite's study establishes that the Chinese Muslims have understood themselves formally to be simultaneously Chinese and Muslim, i.e. Chineseness is as central as Muslimness. For Benite, then, one cannot assert that Liu Zhi's works diminish the Muslimness of Chinese Islam.

It should be noted that Benite has also studied the uniqueness of Muhammad in Liu Zhi's work.²⁹⁷ According to Benite, Liu did not just write a mere biography of the prophet. Benite asserts the content and the purpose of Liu's writing as

a characterization of the Islamic world, and Chinese historical documents pertaining to Chinese Islam, ... Liu Zhi's perception of the Huihui people as a group who had contributed to the stability and strength of several Chinese dynasties and as a group who in the Qing were to make their most significant contribution to Chinese greatness through scholarship ... By embracing the very cultural categories that stood as markers of Confucian literati dominance, Chinese Muslim intellectuals were able discursively to create a space for themselves and their tradition at the very centre of Chinese society ... Paradoxically, through the adoption of the specific ingredients most essential to 'Chineseness' (the preservation of tradition, the study of Dao [real being], the veneration of the sages, and loyalty to the state), Chinese Muslims solidified their identity as Muslims as well.²⁹⁸

Thus, Benite argues that Liu's effort is to affirm his readers' Muslim identity and they should seek to be fully Muslims as well as fully Chinese. They should also be loyal subjects to serve the imperial Qing government though this government might not be tolerant to Muslim practices. The principal argument in Benite's work is sound and he puts forward his case convincingly based on primary sources. To summarize, it is necessary to appreciate the importance of the Scripture Hall Education System and the intellectual networks in the 18th century. Benite gives support to the idea that the Muslim literati, including Liu Zhi, did not attempt to accommodate their Islamic works into Chinese cultures. Primarily, they attempted to establish the Hui identity, namely as both Muslims and Chinese.

²⁹⁷ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 208-213. Ben-Dor Benite examines Liu's 天方至聖實錄 *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, N.p., ca. 1720 Reprinted (Tianjin: Huizu Zhongguo Yisilanjiao, 1987).

²⁹⁸ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 210-13.

In 2005, James D. Frankel examined the metaphysics and contextualized theology of Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* and finished with a PhD thesis from Columbia University. Frankel argues that Liu Zhi and his contemporary Chinese Muslim literati in late imperial China created a viable expression of Chinese Islamic ideology and identity, forming a *Han Kitab* genre, or canon. Such a canon is widely acknowledged as authoritative by many Hui Muslims. Frankel agrees with the common consensus that Liu Zhi was 'an epitomic figure in this history, contributed significantly to the refinement, legitimization and popularization of this aspect of Chinese Islamic culture, residing rather comfortably in the space where two civilizations meet.'²⁹⁹ Frankel's argument about Liu Zhi's contextualization is nuanced and will be critically examined in the sixth chapter of this present work.

The best-known interpreter of Liu Zhi's Islamic teaching in English is Sachiko Murata. She has made substantial contributions to Liu Zhi's works in English for the last two decades. Murata would not agree that Liu Zhi's works sinicize Islam into Chinese culture. While Liu Zhi's doctrine belongs to the Sufi tradition, Murata notes that 'clearly the Sufi works along with Neo-Confucianism that form the basis for Liu Chih's explanation of Islamic teachings.'³⁰⁰ Also, Murata argues that Liu Zhi's *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* would not 'overtly betray its Islamic origin.'³⁰¹ Furthermore, Murata explains that 'Liu Chih's constant mention of the term "Real" is perhaps the major indication of the book's Islamic provenance. He speaks repeatedly of the "Real Being" (*chen-yu*), an expression that is not employed in the Chinese classics.'³⁰² When Murata examines Liu Zhi's translation of 18th Gleam of *Lawa'ih*, she notes that Liu Zhi added a long paragraph to introduce the Gleam using Neo-Confucian terms. According to Murata, the addition is not mutual dialogue or integration of Chinese philosophy with Islamic philosophy. While

²⁹⁹ James D. Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey through Ritual Law to Allah's Chinese Name: Conceptual Antecedents and Theological Obstacles to the Confucian-Islamic Harmonization of the *Tianfang Dianli*' (PhD thesis: Columbia University, 2005) 12-13.

³⁰⁰ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 26.

³⁰¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 121.

³⁰² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 123.

Liu Zhi added an extra introductory paragraph, he also removed Jami's Greek philosophy in the 18th Gleam. Liu Zhi used Neo-Confucian terms like substance, function, principle and vital-energy to make clear to the Chinese readers very much the same philosophical scheme as written by Jami.³⁰³ That is, Liu Zhi's translation is the dynamic equivalent meaning of the text achieved by using Neo-Confucian terms and concepts as a linguistic tool. In her most recent work, Murata competently demonstrates that in order to explicate Liu Zhi's work thoroughly and its continuity with Middle Eastern medieval Islam, it is important to be informed of Liu Zhi's Arabic and Persian source materials, in particular the Ibn 'Arabi tradition.³⁰⁴

It can be seen that works in English generally agree that Liu Zhi's works do not deliberately adapt or sinicize the Islamic tradition that he received into Neo-Confucian culture. Liu Zhi's contextualization is to use Confucian terms to communicate the Islamic message so that the Muslims may have the right understanding, thinking and unveiling in their return to the Real.

(2) Works in Chinese

Although works in English are not as plentiful and there is limited debate among scholars in their understanding of Liu Zhi, works in Chinese are more numerous and there is a spectrum of different opinions among scholars in China. One of the most common discussions is Liu Zhi's contextualization. As this topic is relevant to the present study, it is singled out in our discussion here.

Many Chinese scholars advocate that Liu Zhi's works have adapted Islam in China into a Confucianized Islam. The majority of scholars support the idea that Liu Zhi's Islam is not the traditional Islam but an adapted or Confucianized version of Islam. Some scholars can put the argument in a nuanced manner and others may not be so articulate. One such attempt by using a sociological approach is not convincing. Na Qi asserts that when two

³⁰³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 125-26.

³⁰⁴ Murata, *Sage*.

civilizations meet, namely Islam and Neo-Confucianism, the three natural steps of interaction are difference, conflict and integration.³⁰⁵ Na Qi believes that the 17th-century sinicization of Hui Muslims was the inevitable end product and the final step of all encounters between two civilizations. Really, Na argues that Hui Muslims are justified sociologically to be classified as one of the Chinese ethnic minorities. His argument is far from convincing because of limited historical evidences.

A thoughtful approach is undertaken by Ding Kejia. Rather than examining Liu Zhi's trilogy, Ding examines his Sufism.³⁰⁶ Ding compares Liu Zhi's own translation of Jami's *Lawa'ih*, namely *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* with Jami's original work. Ding argues that while Liu Zhi was faithful to Jami's work, he creatively transformed it in his free translation by using Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. Not only was Liu Zhi able to explain the concept of unity of existence, he also transformed the Persian Jami's Sufi teaching into the Chinese language context and made Sufism attractive as a very practical and yet transcending, self-exalting and ideal religious practice. Thus, Liu Zhi's *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* was able to provide both intellectual and practical meanings within the Chinese language context for Sufism. When the Persian Sufi concept was freely translated and used in explaining the Hui Islamic rites within the Chinese language context, the two cultural contexts then had mutual learning, understanding and dialogue. The result is fusion and exchanges. For Ding Kejia, then, Persian Sufism was sinicized by Liu Zhi's editing work. Ding's analysis is better than Na because Ding has examined the translated text of Liu Zhi and they both agree with the majority view.

Other Chinese scholars are more articulate than Na and Ding. They have written substantial monographs on Liu Zhi. They are Liang Xiangming, Liu Yihong and Sha Zhongping. While Liang accepts there are minor different emphases in ethics between Hui Muslims and

³⁰⁵ Na Qi, 'Difference, Conflicts and Integration are the Three Steps in the Dialogue between Civilizations: also on the Historical Dialogue between the Huis and the Confucians in China,' *Journal of Yunnan Nationalities University* 23.5 (2006) 136-141.

³⁰⁶ Ding Kejia, 'Cultures Expressed in Chinese Language Context and the Philosophical Communication between China and Iran,' *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Study* 59.3 (2005) 25-30.

Neo-Confucians, he asserts that Hui Muslim literati virtually adopted almost all the moral self-cultivating ethical principles of Neo-Confucianism as expressed by Zhu Xi.³⁰⁷ In his book study of Liu Zhi, Liang argues that Liu Zhi absorbed and adapted Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist philosophy so that Islamic philosophy was enriched. The resulting effort of Liu Zhi's contextualization was that while Islam was different to other religions, Islamic truth was not separable from other religions. In addition, Liu Zhi used Buddhist and Daoist theosophical concepts to explain divine transformation, effusion of the oneness and multiplicity of the real being.³⁰⁸ Liang's thesis is that broadly speaking, Liu Zhi's works succeeded by integrating Hui Islam into Neo-Confucianism. However, he admits that Liu Zhi's teachings still retained some of the basic tenets of Islam like the existence of one supreme God.

Liu Yihong's comparative study between Chinese Islam and Neo-Confucianism provides a methodological analysis of the works by Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi and Ma Dexin.³⁰⁹ She argues that three models of dialogue can be identified. Firstly, Wang Daiyu used Neo-Confucianism to explicate Islam, i.e. explaining the doctrine of Islam through Neo-Confucianism. Wang Daiyu still maintained Islam was unique. Secondly, Liu Zhi perceived Neo-Confucianism and Islam as mutually complementing each other. In addition, fading Neo-Confucianism could experience revival when it was combined with Islamic philosophy. Thirdly, Ma Dexin believed that Islam could enhance Neo-Confucianism. It enriched certain aspects of Neo-Confucianism especially Islamic teaching on afterlife.³¹⁰ That is a model of explication, mutual complement and enhancement. While Liu Yihong's model is perceptive, the conclusion of her study at the end of her book seems one-sided and contrary to her data, especially concerning Liu Zhi's work.

³⁰⁷ Liang Xiangming, 'Brief Discussion of the Influence of Confucian Moral Ethics upon the Hui's Ethics,' *Journal of the Second Northwest University for Nationalities* 37 (1998) 27.

³⁰⁸ Liang Xiangping, *Liu Zhi*, 46-48.

³⁰⁹ Liu Yihong 劉一虹, *Dialogue between Islam and Confucianism: the Islamic Belief and the Confucius' Dao 回儒對話－天方之經與孔孟之道* (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2000).

³¹⁰ Liu Yihong, *Dialogue*, 11-12.

While it is necessary [for the Chinese Muslim literati] to integrate Islamic and traditional Chinese philosophy, certain unsolvable problems of Islamic philosophy can be better explained by borrowing the wisdom of Chinese thoughts. Mystery is then solved and propagation of Islam is then enabled. This lays the foundation for Chinese Islam to spread and develop. The creative element of Chinese Islamic thought is due to the result of dialogue between cultures and civilizations.³¹¹

On one level, Liu Yihong argues that Chinese Islam is enhanced and enriched by Confucian thoughts. On another level, the articulate and architectonic system of Neo-Confucianism provides not merely the linguistic and conceptual tools to infuse rigorously the meaning of difficult Islamic terms. It also enables Arabic and Persian Islamic metaphysical terms to be imbued with creative and fresh meanings. When adaptation applies to Hui Islam, Liu Yihong interprets it as sinicization. Her view belongs to the majority view that Liu Zhi's Islam was Confucianized. Such a process began from the 17th century, has continued to the present and made Chinese Islam different from the Middle Eastern Islamic tradition. Such localized Islam with Chinese characteristics³¹² is understood as sinicized Islam. Chinese Islam is adapted and different qualitatively from its Middle Eastern origin.

Sha Zhongping investigates Liu Zhi's doctrine of real being and humanity in *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. He focuses on the latter part of this work and analyzes Liu Zhi's diagrams. Liu Zhi used these diagrams to explain the teachings in the former part of his work. Sha asserts that Liu Zhi's Islam has been Confucianized. Firstly, he explains generally that the spirit of the age is expressed by philosophy. The linguistic terms are tools like cloth that clothes the spirit. Secondly, he avers that Liu Zhi used Neo-Confucian lexemes and concepts as his cloth, following the spirit of his age. Cloth covers the content. Sha then argues that Liu Zhi used Neo-Confucianism as the cloth that covered the content which was Persian Islamic philosophy, especially the Sufi teaching of Jami.³¹³

The subtlety of Sha's argument can be demonstrated in his explication of Liu Zhi's doctrine of divine being. The Qur'anic divine name Allah was converted by Liu Zhi to 'Real Ruler

³¹¹ Liu Yihong, *Dialogue*, 178.

³¹² This phrase is commonly found in popular Chinese religious literature 有中國特色的伊斯蘭教.

³¹³ Sha, *Chinese Islam*, 281-82.

or Lord'. For Sha, the first step is that the object of Islamic faith transformed from Allah to Real Ruler. This step is a contextualizing of naming. The second step is a transformation of the content. The Real Ruler becomes Real One. Again, the concept of Real One is initiated by Liu Zhi's predecessor Wang Daiyu who has taught the great transformation in terms of the Real One, Numerical One and the Embodied One. The concept of the Real One expresses the content of Confucianized Islam.³¹⁴ Then, Sha concludes that Liu Zhi combined medieval Arabic Islam with the school of principle (*li*) of Neo-Confucianism under the archetypal principle of 'Real One'. 'Eventually, the concept of Real One forms the intellectual basis of Chinese Islamic philosophy.'³¹⁵ The proof of sinicization of Chinese Islam is Liu Zhi's concept of Real One that takes over the Arabic divine name Allah.

Liang, Liu and Sha build up articulate and nuanced arguments in different ways that Hui Islam was sinicized by Liu Zhi's works. Other Chinese scholars have also attempted in other ways to support the thesis that Neo-Confucianism enriched Hui Islam and that Liu Zhi succeeded to a large extent in the sinicization of Chinese Islam.³¹⁶

The minority camp disagrees with the common consensus about the sinicization of Hui Islam in 17th century China by the Hui Muslim literati. There are not many of them and they have published short essays in Chinese journals. A few of them are discussed to present an overview of the minority view.

³¹⁴ Sha Zhongping, 'Confucianism and Islam Fused into One in the Context of the Zhen-Yi Theory,' *Journal of Nanjing University* 151 (2003) 58-59.

³¹⁵ Sha, 'Confucianism and Islam Fused,' 58.

³¹⁶ The following essays are some samples. Sun Junping, Su Baogui, 'Introductory Exploration of *Rites of Islam*,' *Philosophical Researches* 11 (1993) 63-66; Cai Degui, 'The Fusion of Liu Zhi's Islamic Philosophy and Chinese Traditional Philosophy,' *History of Chinese Philosophy* 1 (1997) 108-115; Ji Fangtong, 'A Comparison of Life Self-Cultivation between Hui and Confucianism. A Study based on Early Qing Hui Thinker Liu Zhi and his Work *Philosophy of Islam*,' *N.W. Ethno-National Studies* 46.3 (2005) 134-142; Alim Tuohuti, 'On Wang Daiyu's and Liu Zhi's Contributions to Islamic Philosophy,' *Journal of Xinjiang Univeristy (Philosophy, Humanities & Social Science)* 35.6 (2007) 104-107.

A critical work in Taiwan was done in Chinese by Zheng Wenquan.³¹⁷ He argues that Liu Zhi's philosophy of Islam is not a sinicized Chinese Islam. He asserts that the philosophical system of Liu Zhi was still Islamic and it is a mistake to claim that Islam has been sinicized by Liu Zhi. From a philosophical methodology, Zheng Wenquan emphatically disagrees with the majority view. His main argument is that the concept of Real One does not originate from Neo-Confucianism which the other side of the debate often takes for granted. Zheng asserts that such a concept already existed among Sufis in 13th-century Asia. Secondly, it is not so much that Islamic philosophy has been sinicized by Neo-Confucianism, Liu Zhi's work really re-interpreted Ibn 'Arabi's cosmology and humanity. Thirdly, while Liu Zhi used many Neo-Confucian terms, the dynamic meaning of the translated terms remains Islamic and not Chinese. It is just natural for Liu Zhi to use Neo-Confucian linguistic tools because there was no other available. Furthermore, Zheng argues that the Hui Muslim literati in the 16th – 17th century achieved the beginning of a new age of Chinese Islamic philosophy for the Hui. It was an existential Islamic philosophy in the Chinese language context that included primarily a re-presentation of Ibn 'Arabi-like philosophy and secondarily a dialogue with non Ibn 'Arabi philosophy current at that time.³¹⁸

The second writer is Min Wenjie.³¹⁹ It is often argued that Liu Zhi's Islamic teaching of five ethical relationships is so closely related with the Confucian five relationships that Liu Zhi's Islamic ethic was again sinicized. Min is able to identify at least five differences between Liu Zhi's Islamic five relationships and the Confucian five relationships i.e. basis, order, content, goal and afterlife. He cautions the need for care and more thorough research and avoids reading Liu Zhi's works as simple resonance and parallels with Neo-Confucianism.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Wenquan Zheng, 'A Study on the Islamic Nature of Liu Zhi's Philosophy' (MA thesis Taoyuan, Taiwan: National Central University, 1998).

³¹⁸ Zheng Wenquan, 'Islamic Philosophy in China,' <http://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~hkshp> (accessed on 25th May, 2008).

³¹⁹ Min Wenjie, 'The Comparison between Five Ethics of Confucianism and Five Ethics of Liu Zhi's Thought,' *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies* 65.1 (2007) 32-36.

³²⁰ Min Wenjie, 'Comparison,' 36.

The third writer is Yang Huaizhong who provides the Ming dynasty Islamic context of the Hui and the attitude of the Hui towards contextualization. Owing to stricter imperial control, forcing the Muslims to adopt Han names and dress, Yang argues that the Hui became more open minded, willing to study Neo-Confucianism. The eventual attitude of Hui intellectuals at the end of the Ming dynasty was ‘do not betray Islam and do not be tied down by Islam.’³²¹ That is a sound judgment by Yang who provides a context that fits best the effort of the Chinese Muslim literati. The revival spirit of Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi that reflects in their work is more than mere survival and strengthening of the Hui Muslim identity. It is also to make exoteric aspects of Islam into esoteric spiritual discipline, namely, reform by inner transformation.

The last and most persistent opponent to a superficial reading of Liu Zhi’s work is a Chinese scholar in China, Yang Zhongdong. He examines the comparative study between Zhu Xi and Liu Zhi and also studies Liu Zhi’s Sufism. Yang Zhongdong emphatically asserts that Liu Zhi commonly used the Confucian terms but he infused such terms with Islamic meanings. While Liu Zhi’s teachings of the return of humanity and reunion with the divine being by a/the Sufi path might have parallels with Zhu Xi’s union with the principle *li*, Liu Zhi clearly had a specific goal of union with the divine being. Thus, Yang Zhongdong asserts that familiar Confucian terms did not carry the same meaning after Liu Zhi’s redefinition.³²² Yang Zhongdong argues that Liu Zhi’s Islam was firmly rooted in Sufi mysticism. He traces the Sufi source of Liu Zhi’s concept of divine transformation. The source was Nasafi’s *The Furthest Goal* and definitely not Neo-Confucianism’s concepts of *li* and *qi* or the concept of *yin* and *yang*.³²³

³²¹ Yang Huaizhong, ‘Do not Betray Islam and Do not be Tied Down by Islam: Hui Intellectuals’ Attitude toward the Cultural Exchange between the Hui Scholars and Confucians,’ *Researches on the Hui* 48 (2002) 5-8.

³²² Yang Zhongdong, ‘Pilot Study of Liu Zhi’s Idealism in Life and Difference between Liu Zhi and Zhu Xi,’ *Journal of Xinjiang University (Social Science Ed.)* 29.1 (2001) 55-56; Yang Zhongdong, ‘Similarity in Forms and Dissimilarity in Content: A Comparative Study of Liu Zhi and Zhu Xi,’ *Journal of Xinjiang University* 31.1 (2003) 48-51.

³²³ Yang Zhongdong, ‘Mirsad and Liu Zhi on the Creation of the Universe,’ *Journal of Ningxia University (Social Science Ed.)* 24.4 (2002) 26.

Yang identifies that various Islamic concepts in Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* can be traced to six Sufi works available at the time of Liu Zhi. Yang Zhongdong asserts two implications. Firstly, Sufism in China was widespread in 17th-century China. It was not limited to several institutions or schools of Sufi thought. Certainly, it was common in Northwest China and also among Uyghurs. Secondly, Liu Zhi's Sufi Islam was fundamentally different from Neo-Confucianism. Sufi Islam was not merely mystical ritual. 17th-century Chinese Sufi Islam was grounded profoundly in Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy. Yang Zhongdong's conclusion is very similar to Zheng Wenquan's. Yang argues that Liu Zhi's Islam is existential Sufi Islam because Liu Zhi used selectively and edited freely his Sufi source materials. This formed his core materials and philosophical framework. To express the Islamic philosophical framework, Liu Zhi used Neo-Confucianism as his tool. Then, he edited his core materials and philosophical framework to fit into the usage of Chinese language.³²⁴ For Yang Zhongdong, then, it is permissible to say that the Chinese language context affected Liu Zhi's choice of Sufi and philosophical core Islamic materials. Nothing more can be said beyond that about Liu Zhi's contextualization of Hui Islam. At this moment, the minority camp is not gaining any ground in this debate because more substantial research is needed to make this view more convincing.

3.3.3 Remark and Comment

Firstly, while the Chinese scholars contribute numerous essays on Liu Zhi's contextualization, the few English scholars have not written much and yet it is sufficient to see the emergent point of view. Murata has not paid much attention to Liu Zhi's contextualization. She supports the view that Liu Zhi's interpretation of Islam in Confucian terms is sophisticated and articulate. Frankel has studied Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Frankel says that Liu Zhi's trilogy reflects 'an acceptance of the essential ethical and metaphysical harmony of Islam and Confucianism, and thus represents the heights of

³²⁴ Yang Zhongdong, 'Arabian Principles of Nature and Sufist Mysticism,' *Journal of Xinjiang University (Social Science Ed.)* 30.1 (2002) 86-90.

Muslim intellectual accommodation to the Chinese cultural paradigm.³²⁵ Frankel further opines that ‘Liu Zhi downplayed the role of revelation, rather expounding theological concepts with frequent reference to natural law.’³²⁶ Frankel supports the view that syncretism ‘in the realm of ideas is then the obvious, logical product of the evolution of a genuine simultaneity of identity and consciousness. Such is the case of Chinese Muslims generally, and of Liu Zhi more specifically, whose heritage of accommodation and assimilation produced a simultaneity that resulted in the sophisticated syncretic thought found in the *Han Kitab* literature.’³²⁷ While there is little dialogue between Western and Chinese scholars on Liu Zhi’s contextualization of Islam into Confucianism, it would be simplistic to divide scholarly opinions into mere Western and Chinese camps.³²⁸

Secondly, it should also be noted that while Liu Zhi’s works are often studied and analyzed, Wang Daiyu’s works are likewise earnestly studied by both Chinese and English contemporary scholars. Both Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi initiated the first important stage of translating and interpreting Islamic texts into Chinese using Confucian terms and concepts in 16th-18th century China. Thus, Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi are occasionally studied comparatively. While Murata studies the two scholars comparatively in one single monograph, Jin publishes two monographs, firstly on Liu Zhi and secondly on Wang Daiyu.³²⁹ They are studied together to enforce the argument that both of them attempted to expound the fundamental tenets of Islam using Confucian concepts and terms. Wang is known for his three works on Islam.³³⁰ Various research works on Wang have been done by Chinese scholars and they share a broadly similar point of view.³³¹ The common consensus

³²⁵ Frankel, *Liu Zhi’s Journey*, 10.

³²⁶ Frankel, *Liu Zhi’s Journey*, 11.

³²⁷ Frankel, *Rectifying*, xvii.

³²⁸ It should be noted that even within the Chinese works in Chinese, scholars are not accustomed to interacting with opposing views and examining critically various points of view.

³²⁹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*. Jin, *Chinese Islam*; Jin, *Study on Wang*.

³³⁰ Wang Daiyu, 正教真詮, 清真大學, 希真正答 *A True Interpretation of the Orthodox Teaching, The Great Learning of the Pure and True; Orthodox Response of the Very True*. Reprinted. (Yinchuan: Ningxia People’s Press, 1988).

³³¹ Li Zhenzhong, 李振中, ‘王岱與與中亞文化文流 Wang Daiyu and Sino Arabic Cultural Exchange,’ *Researches on the Hui* (1999). Jin Yijiu 金宜久, ‘王岱與著作的思想結構 Ideological Structure of Wang Daiyu’s Works,’ *Researches on the Hui* 48 (2002) 14-19. Sha Zongping 沙宗平, ‘王岱與與真一哲學初探

or the majority view among recent Chinese scholars is that Wang was a highly educated sinicized Muslim and great expositor of Islamic doctrines, in particular the doctrine of divine unity. He made great efforts to write and preach to his fellow Muslims who were fast acculturated into Chinese culture. Wang's endeavours were to enable his fellow Muslims to continue and hold fast to their religious theory and practice. Thus, both the works of Wang and Liu are interpreted similarly by the Chinese scholars in the majority camp.

Thirdly, the Chinese scholars in the majority camp are over-confident that Hui Islam was unavoidably integrated both into the Chinese language context and the architectonic philosophy of Zhu Xi of Neo-Confucianism during the translation of the Islamic texts. They prejudge that the overpowering sinicization of Buddhism, Daoism and the almighty Chinese syncretism in the form of Neo-Confucianism can do the same to Liu Zhi's and other scholars' works. However, Liu Zhi set his heart not to betray Islam and simultaneously not be tied down by it. This was the context in which Liu Zhi and other Muslim literati operated.

Finally, a preliminary study of Liu Zhi's *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* later in this present work can demonstrate that while Liu Zhi employed Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian terms, his concern was to integrate Islamic doctrines with Sufism. He used these concepts as linguistic tools. Thus, his work was in the spirit of Hui Islamic reform using the Chinese language context as a God-sent opportunity to modernize Islam and the traditional Chinese Sufism using Neo-Confucian concepts. After critically examining the contemporary scholarship on Liu Zhi, the most likely theory is that in the spirit of reform, Liu Zhi worked to reformulate and construct a pre-modern and existential Hui Islamic philosophy and Sufism within the Chinese language context.

On Wang-daiyu's True-one Philosophy,' 哲學門第四卷第二冊 (2003). Sun Zhenyu 孫振玉, 王岱輿 劉智評傳 *A Critical Biography of Wang Dai Yu, Liu Zhi* (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2006).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of almost all Liu Zhi's works including both long and short treatises. It has given a brief account of Chinese scholarship on his works especially the debate of Confucianization of Liu Zhi's work into Chinese culture. In addition, this chapter has introduced recent scholarship of Liu Zhi by Chinese scholars to the English speaking world.

This chapter begins by introducing almost all extant works by Liu Zhi, not only his trilogy but also easy-to-read shorter tracts and treatises. Although research work in English and Chinese often focuses on his trilogy, this chapter provides an overview of Liu Zhi's theosophical and Sufi works. The final section of this chapter gives an account of recent scholarship in English and Chinese in Liu Zhi's work. There has been intense research interest in the works of Liu Zhi in recent years. It is hoped that the following chapters can make a significant contribution.

Chapter Four:

4.0 Liu Zhi's Engagement with the Concept of the Unity of Existence of the Ibn 'Arabi Tradition

The chapter will give an account of Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence in his short work, namely the *Three-character Classic* and longer work, namely his trilogy. It will then discuss this concept in his translated work, namely *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*. His translated work complies with Jami's scheme of the unity of existence in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition and yet Liu Zhi gave a contextualized translation and made the work easier to understand for his Chinese readers. This chapter will end by giving a new perspective of the thematic analysis of the unity of existence in Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

4.1 Liu Zhi and the Ibn 'Arabi Tradition of the Unity of Existence

4.1.1 Wang Daiyu and the Ibn 'Arabi Tradition in China

The foundational principles of Ibn 'Arabi's teachings are the unity of existence, the perfect human being, microcosmic and macrocosmic worldview. These principles form the basics of Islamic teachings in 16th-18th century China. Wang Daiyu's works were influenced by Ibn 'Arabi and his Sufi thought. In Wang Daiyu's famous work, *The Real Commentary*, Wang said that his ancestors had lived in Arabia and come to China three hundred years earlier.³³² Wang did not know any Chinese when he was young and later he was able to master the intellectual ideas and even have dialogues and debates with other Chinese scholars on their own terms. Wang began to write Islamic texts in Chinese in the tradition of Ibn 'Arabi and use various eclectic Neo-Confucian concepts to convey Islamic teachings.

³³² Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 余振貴點校, *The Real Learning* 正教真詮; 清真大學; 希真正答 (Yinching: Ningxia People Press, 1987).

Wang's core teaching was concerned with *tawhid*. 'Tawhid demands that all of existence be governed by a single, supreme Reality.'³³³ 'Wang conceived God in terms of three basic grades or levels, namely, the Real One, the Numerical One and the Embodied One.'³³⁴ Three such Ones served an explanation of *tawhid*. God is one and nothing is like God. The three Ones express oneness in manyness. Murata provides a succinct summary of Wang's concept of the three Ones.

"Real One" knows in itself the principle of all manyness. This principle of manyness is called the "Numerical One," because it gives rise to the multiplicity of the universe just as the number one gives rise to all the numbers. But the universe can only reach the fullness of its possibilities through being brought back to the One from which it arose. This is the function of human beings, who, among all creatures, are uniquely qualified to be the "Embodied One."³³⁵

Murata argues that one should interpret Wang's concept in the light of the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. Most of Murata's explications of Wang's writings are based on probable parallel concepts between Wang and Ibn 'Arabi. Her argument is persuasive as Sufi thought has been deeply influential on Islam in China.³³⁶

As pointed out by Jin Yijiu, Wang is influenced by Ibn 'Arabi's concept of the perfect human being.³³⁷ One of the common Ibn 'Arabi schemes of divine disclosures has five grades. The fifth grade is the perfect human being, 'the full manifestation of the human reality, which brings together, actualizes, integrates, and synthesizes all realms of being.'³³⁸

³³³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 8.

³³⁴ Tu Weiming says that 'technical terms such as "embodied one," "numerical one," and "real one" are perplexing to Confucian moral and religious reasoning, but the implicit anthropocosmic vision is Confucian to the core.' Murata, *Sage*, 615.

³³⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 75.

³³⁶ Sufi teachings have been popular since the founding of the Madrasah education system in the late 16th century in various parts of China. Persian works on Sufi ethics and the philosophy of the unity of being are adopted as the text books in the Madrasah. Akiro Matsumoto, 'The Sufi Intellectual Tradition among Sino-Muslims' in Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Sufism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* (London: Routledge, 2008) 101-119, citing 111. Also, Jin, *Sufism in China* (2012).

³³⁷ Jin Yijiu, *A Study on Wang Daiyu's Thoughts* (Beijing: Ethnic Publishing House, 2008) 152.

³³⁸ Murata, *Sage*, 47.

Wang often called the perfect human being the human ultimate.³³⁹ Thus, Wang and others including Liu Zhi are set firmly in the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabi.³⁴⁰

The following tables analyse and summarize the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabi’s understandings of the unity of existence and divine disclosure by Murata and Wang Junrong. Murata outlines a very basic scheme common among all the followers of Ibn ‘Arabi. Wang Junrong presents a scheme that is common among Chinese Muslim literati. The table below illustrates the various grades of existence and the continuity between the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition and the Chinese tradition supported by the Chinese Muslim literati.

Grade of Disclosure	Ibn ‘Arabi’s Basic Scheme (Murata³⁴¹)	Chinese Traditional Scheme (Wang Junrong³⁴²)
First grade: God in itself	God is unknown to anything other than itself	The substance of Real Ruler
Second grade: God and the creator of universe	God is known by a diversity of names; grade of divinity	The names and attributes of the Real Ruler
Third grade	God brings the many into existence based on its own knowledge of its infinite reality	The will and power of the Real Ruler
Fourth grade		The world of images and imaginations
Fifth grade		The world of thoughts or spiritual beings
Sixth grade		The visible world of

³³⁹ Jin, *A Study on Wang*, 153.

³⁴⁰ Liu Zhi’s concept of the human ultimate has been researched by Murata. S. Murata, ‘Liu Zhi’s View on Perfect Manhood 劉智論人極,’ *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies* 62 (2006) 16-18.

³⁴¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 74.

³⁴² Wang, *Unity of Heaven and Man*, 53.

		humans and ten thousand things
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Murata further elaborates and explains the continuity between the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition and Wang Daiyu’s concept. The basic concept of Wang’s divine being is expressed by three grades, namely the Real One, Numerical One and Embodied One. Murata demonstrates the similarities in structural framework between Wang and the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition. The following table shows the continuity between the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition and Wang Daiyu’s concept of divine disclosures.

Unity and Multiplicity of the Divine Being	Wang Daiyu’s Interpretation in Confucian terms	Wang Daiyu’s Reconciliation with the Ibn ‘Arabi Tradition (Murata)
God in itself (oneness)	Real One: root origin of the non-Ultimate; the unique One	The divine essence (<i>dhat</i>) is not to be properly designated by any name or attribute
At the level of the origin of universe (still at the grade of oneness)	Numerical One: If this existence is perceived in negative terms, it is the non-Ultimate; in positive term, it is the Great Ultimate. This is the principle of multiplicity	The divinity (<i>uluhiyya</i>) can be discussed in terms of names and attributes. The divinity embraces all principles ³⁴³ and it is the pattern or logos for all of creation ³⁴⁴
At the grade of multiplicity	Embodied One: humans alone are able to bring the	The human perfect being (<i>al-insan al-kamil</i>)

³⁴³ It is called the Reality of Realities (*haqiqat al-haqa’iq*). Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 49.

³⁴⁴ It is called the Muhammadan Reality. Murata asserts that Wang refers to both the Reality of Realities and Muhammadan Reality as the Utmost Sage. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 75.

	many back to the One	
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The following table illustrates further the content of Wang's *Great Learning of the Pure and Real* which primarily teaches the concept of existence in terms of the three Ones.³⁴⁵ It shows Wang Daiyu's concept in greater detail.³⁴⁶

	The Real One: the unique and independent One; the Real Lord; at root the Real has nothing to do with the ten thousand things	1.0 Root nature 本然 (substance): the Beginningless Original Being 2.0 Root allotment 本分 (function): attribute ; movement and quietude of the root nature 3.0 Root act 本為: (act) the surplus of the unique and independent One, possessing all the subtlety of the formless
The doctrine of the three Ones	The Numerical One: the one root of ten thousand things and the chief summit of the Powerful Being; this root origin is called the Non-Ultimate	1.0 Original honoured 元勳 (substance): the Utmost Sage; great fountain of nature and mandate 2.0 Representative 代理 (function): opening and issuing forth of ten thousand spirituals 3.0 Scribe 代書 (the act): surplus of the Pure Essence; and it is the naturally issuing disclosure to the outside or the Great Ultimate.
	The Embodied One: at the human level of the oneness of recognition with	1.0 Recognition with knowledge 知認 (substance): to inquire about and to imitate the sages and worthies 2.0 Recognition with seeing 見認 (function):

³⁴⁵ Wang Daiyu, *Great Learning of the Pure and Real*, 232-49.

³⁴⁶ The table is composed after consulting both the work of Murata and Jin. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 81-100. Jin Yijiu, *A Study on Wang Daiyu's Thoughts* (Beijing: Ethnic Publishing House, 2008) 256-61.

	body	<p>while with the body, humans recognized the Real Ruler with the body.</p> <p>3.0 Recognition with continuity 繼認 (the act) :</p> <p>to conquer entirely both selfishness and opinions of self, returning completely to the fountainhead and recognizing the Real Ruler with body while depending on no-self.</p>
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The above table contains additional information that the previous two tables have not shown. While Murata has provided a helpful English translation of Wang's text and a few comments on Wang's Islamic concepts, she has not analyzed in details the scheme of the three Ones. The following comments should be noted.

Firstly, it gives a clear description of existence in accordance with Wang Daiyu's work and also an account of human existence. Contrary to the usual five or seven grades of divine disclosures in the Malay-Indonesian world in the 16th and 17th-century,³⁴⁷ Wang's scheme of three Ones seems to be simpler. However, each grade of the One is further divided into sub-grades, namely substance, function and act. Wang's scheme is in fact still complex.

Secondly, Wang's concept of the three Ones at the second grade includes not only the divine disclosure of the Real but even at the first sub-grade of the Embodied One, humanity or rather the perfect human being can recognize this grade and return to the Real Ruler from this grade. Each grade of the One has three further sub-grades. These grades are in descending order. However, humanity can ascend and return to the Real. Wang specified a process of ascent which emphasized the 'recognition with continuity' (the act) at the third sub-grade of the Embodied One. It shall be explained later in the sixth chapter of this present study that Liu Zhi asserted that the prophet Muhammad had a very unique nature of

³⁴⁷ Hamzah Fansuri in the 16th-century supported five grades and Shams al-Din al-Samatra'i in the 17th-century supported seven grades. Peter Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World* (London: Hurst & Company, 2001) 103-15.

continuity. He is indeed the perfect human being. Liu Zhi contextualized the prophet as the Utmost Sage in the Neo-Confucian context.

Finally and in addition to the above tables, in Wang's *Real Commentary of the True Teaching*, it says that there are three types of heart, namely real, human and animal. 'According to the *Hadith*, heaven and earth encompasses Me not, but the heart of the true believer does encompass Me.'³⁴⁸ People have seven grades which are desire, wisdom, humanity, seeing, enjoying, mystery and the utmost grade. Only Muslim people have all these grades. Worldly people have only three grades: desire, wisdom and benevolence. Animal has only one grade, namely desire. While Wang did not give great emphasis to the role of heart, Liu Zhi made use of Wang's scheme of three Ones and revised it with greater emphasis on the role of the heart.

The next section will examine Liu Zhi's shorter tract, *The Three-character Classic*, his translated work *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* and his longer works, the trilogy. By making a more comprehensible examination of both short and long works, one can present and demonstrate a more convincing case of Liu Zhi's contextualization than previous studies have made.

4.1.2 Liu Zhi's Theological Conversation with a Neo-Confucian Classic: The Three-character Classic

The Three-character Classic is a short tract for general readership by Liu Zhi and the text has 1334 Chinese words; each phrase in three Chinese characters and total 448 phrases of three characters. It should be noted that from the time of the Song dynasty (960 – 1279), Chinese literature work for educating beginners often was structured into three characters to help easier memorization. It was a common type of pedagogy in primary education. Not only did each phrase have three characters and taught a simple idea, but the tone might also

³⁴⁸ Wang Daiyu, *Real Commentary of the True Teaching*, 58-59. A good analytical study of Wang's understanding of the role of heart is by K. Petersen. K. Petersen, 'The Heart of the Islamic-Chinese Dialogue: Wang Daiyu and the Creation of a Chinese Muslim Discourse' (MA Thesis: University of Colorado, 2006).

vary. Some had rhymed arrangement and might have continuous meaning.³⁴⁹ They were purely designed for easy understanding and memorization. The three-character style began in the late Song dynasty and became a fundamental element of literacy throughout the Qing period.

Liu Zhi wrote *The Three-character Classic* not only for easier memorization; it was intended primarily for beginners and novices of Islam. He adopted the Neo-Confucian three-character literary style into his Islamic work. It should be noted that this work was very popular and repeatedly copied in the Qing dynasty. It is divided into four sections.

The first section begins with the knowledge of the Ruler. It is the foundational teaching of this work. The Ruler is the creator and the origin of the heaven and earth. In addition, the Ruler does not occupy space, without any form and nothing resembles the Ruler. Liu Zhi also described his attributes as omnipresent, omniscient and almighty. The Ruler created humankind who was the pinnacle of creation. Only humankind had a soul. Humankind through himself could understand the subtle function and the existence of the Ruler. 'The self serves as a reflector of God and a mirror of life.'³⁵⁰

The second section gives an account of the origin and history of Islam. The transmission is through the holy sages and eventually to the Utmost Sage who is the seal of the sages.

In the third section, Liu Zhi explained Islamic rules and proprieties in terms of Neo-Confucian ethics. These included obedience to teachers, respect to the elderly, watchfulness of speech and action and many others. Clearly, Liu Zhi contextualized Neo-Confucian ethics with Islamic rules and rites. However, there are two distinctive differences. Firstly, the coming of the Utmost Sage, the prophet Muhammad is highlighted. On his arrival, Islam is complete. It is in contrast with Confucianism which is not a completed tradition. Confucianism has been developed into Neo-Confucianism and there would be further

³⁴⁹ James T.C. Liu, 'The Classical Chinese Primer: its Three-character Style and Authorship,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 (1985) 191.

³⁵⁰ The Chinese text reads, '參造化, 鑒本身'.

development. Secondly, the Ruler is invisible and nothing is like the Ruler. To bear witness to the Ruler means that the Ruler is one and Muhammad is the messenger. Islam is unique in its monotheism and with its emphasis on the role of the prophet Muhammad.

In the final section, Liu Zhi reminded Muslims that they needed to hold firm to the way of Islam. He also gave warnings that they should persevere in learning and practising the five endeavours. Continuous learning and practising could bring nobility of character³⁵¹ and blessedness.³⁵²

Any careful reader can note one of the main characteristics of this work, namely Liu Zhi's pedagogical technique. He used discourses in the first half of the work to expound the knowledge of the Real Ruler, the importance of the prophet Muhammad and the teaching of the way. In the second half, Liu Zhi turned to the teaching of the rites and proprieties of Islam using Neo-Confucian ideas. His teaching technique changed to question and answer once in a while. He anticipated a number of commonly encountered queries from both beginners and outsiders of Islam. Questions like 'why are you a Muslim'? He gave a very direct and short answer without any deliberation. According to Liu Zhi, 'I am a Muslim by the grace of God.'³⁵³ Similarly, the five endeavours are simply clearly listed and each endeavour is supported with one reason only. Thus, Liu Zhi's sole purpose in this work is for the general public to get a good idea of the basic tenets of Islamic belief and the foundational principle of the rites and proprieties of Islam. The belief in one God of Islam leads to obedience to that God in rules and proprieties of Islam.

The complete *Three-character Classic* was translated into English by F. Cotter and K. Reichelt in 1918 without any comments on Liu Zhi's Islamic background.³⁵⁴ There was no analysis provided by Cotter and Reichelt. Part of Liu Zhi's *Three-character Classic* is now translated below and this selected translation is provided in parallel format to illustrate the

³⁵¹ The Chinese text reads, '品卓高'.

³⁵² The Chinese text reads, '真致福'.

³⁵³ F.J.M. Cotter and K.L. Reichelt (trans.), 'The Three Character Classic for Moslems by Liao Kai Lien of Nanking,' *Moslem World* 8.1 (1918) 12.

³⁵⁴ Cotter and Reichelt, 'The Three Character,' *Moslem World* 8.1 (1918) 10-15.

three-character Chinese literary format. The three-character format is clearly shown on the right hand side of the following parallel translation.

The Three-character Classic

At the beginning of the heaven and earth, ten thousand things were to be formed. The supreme being had existed and was called the Real Ruler.	天地初，萬物始，有至尊， 曰真主！
It governed the innate heaven, ordered the principle and vital energy. It divided light from darkness; transformed heaven and earth.	統乾元，運理氣，分陰陽， 化天地，
It set the foundations of mountains and rivers; called into life grass and trees; foreordained calamity and fortune; gave brightness to the sun and moon.	奠山川，茁草木，定災祥， 彰日月。
...
The first of the way is to bear witness. There is no god but the Real Ruler.	道之首，念真言：物非主，惟 真主。
Muhammad was sent by the Ruler to be the messenger. The essence of the way is to read the Qur'an.	穆罕默，主差使。道之心， 念真經，
The teaching of the <i>Hadith</i> is very clear. Everything has its essence and the essence of Qur'an is the 36 th Sura.	有聖渝，理分明。凡萬物， 皆有心，真經心，雅西音。
.....	...
The Qur'an says, 'watchfulness leads to realization of the way to eternity. Be watchful not to lose it.'	真經雲：慎得遂，後世途， 慎作費。
The core of the way is to know the will of return. When	道之髓，識歸旨。歸旨明，

it is clear, other endeavours can begin.	萬功啟。
The foundation of the way is sincerity. If you have sincere thoughts, other endeavours can succeed.	道之根，在誠意，意既誠，百為濟。
The way resides in the heart. It is inside the Muslims' heart. The heart is the dwelling place of the Lord.	道之宅，穆民心。穆民心，主之闕。
Are you in the way? Is the way in you? If one asks you, you should say, 'I am in the way and the way is in me! Your answer should be without any doubt or uncertainty.	爾在道？道在爾？若人問，爾對此：吾與道，道在我！無恍疑，無適莫。

The above selected translation can illustrate some general and specific aspects of Liu Zhi's work. From a general perspective, firstly Liu Zhi's understanding of Islam adheres closely to the basic tenets of Islam. The divine being is a pre-existent being and the creator of all existents. All creatures are created by the divine being and humankind is an exceptional creature because only humans have the heart. Secondly, he also held to the unique status of the Utmost Sage, Muhammad who is the accomplisher of the way of the Real. The Qur'an also has a unique status because it is divinely revealed through Muhammad. Thirdly, Liu Zhi's contextualization is based on his use of contemporary literary structure to convey directly the teachings of Islam. These general teachings of Islam according to Liu Zhi are: the Real is supreme; the prophet Muhammad is unique and humanity has a heart which is indwelt by the way and able to return to the Real.

From a specific perspective, Liu Zhi clearly upheld the Real Ruler as the creator of all things, including humankind. The Utmost Sage, Qur'an, *Hadith* and the five endeavours point to the way of Islam. For Muslims, the way begins with a sincere and watchful heart. Then Muslims can begin with a firm foundation and seek the way of return to the Real. The

role of the heart is repeatedly emphasized in all short and long works of Liu Zhi.³⁵⁵ He used question and answer format: ‘Are you in the way? Is the way in you? If one asks you, you should say, I am in the way and the way is in me! Your answer should be without any doubt or uncertainty’. Questions are used to sharpen the reader’s thinking and understanding of Islam. All these questions can find detailed answers in Liu Zhi’s trilogy and translated work.

4.1.3 Liu Zhi’s Translation: Abd al-Rahman Jami’s Lawa’ih³⁵⁶ (1414-1492) and Liu Zhi’s Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm

The fact that Liu Zhi translated Jami’s work further suggests that he supported the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition. Jami’s *Lawa’ih* was translated by Liu Zhi into *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*.³⁵⁷ Abd al-Rahman Jami was a famous Sufi, a follower of the Naqshbandi Sufi order and a poet-theologian of the school of Ibn ‘Arabi. He popularized Ibn ‘Arabi’s tradition of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity or oneness of existence) and played an important role in the spreading of his teaching. He expounded a number of teachings about the Sufi path. Jami emphasized that love for the prophet Muhammad was the prerequisite stepping-stone to starting the spiritual journey. In Jami’s *Lawa’ih*, he expounded the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabi in an attractive style and balance of poetry and prose. Murata comments that

The practical issue is the devotional imperative of turning one’s full attention towards the One. The theoretical issue is discerning between the One and the many, or God and the world. In practical terms,

³⁵⁵ A detailed discussion of the role of heart according to Liu Zhi is given in the sixth chapter of this present work. Liu Zhi is influenced by the School of Mind of Neo-Confucianism.

³⁵⁶ Nicholas Heer, ‘Al-Jami’s Treatise on Existence’ in Parviz Morewedge (ed.), *Islamic Philosophical Theology* (Albany: State University of New York, 1979) 223-56. See also, Arthur J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1994). Also, Rizvi, Sajjad H., ‘The Existential Breath of *al-Rahman* and the Munificent Grace of *al-Rahim*: The Tafir Surat al-Fatiha of Jami and the School of Ibn ‘Arabi,’ *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 8 (2006) 58-87.

³⁵⁷ Matsumoto says that both Jami’s *Lawa’ih* and *Ashi* “*at al-lama’at* (Rays of the “Flashes”) have been popular in Madrasah education. He also says that the Persian version of *Ashi* “*at al-lama’at* has exerted great influence than its Chinese version. Matsumoto, ‘The Sufi Intellectual Tradition’, 107.

Jami is telling his readers that it is necessary to see things correctly in order to be able to remember God as he should be remembered. In theoretical terms, he is differentiating between existence (*wujud*) per se, or the reality of God, and the existence that is ascribed to the cosmos.³⁵⁸

This work consists of thirty six Gleams³⁵⁹ in total. The major theme from the thirteenth Gleam to the end of the treatise is to explain the self-disclosure of God into the external and sensual world. In the fourteenth Gleam, Jami distinguished two meanings of existence. Firstly, existence could mean a concept or a mental assertion. However, Jami supported the second meaning. That is, existence is ‘a Reality that has being through Its own Essence, while the rest of the existents have being through It. In reality, there is no existent other than It in the eternal world.’³⁶⁰ Thus, to say that God is existence or God is being really means that God is the ultimate reality that undergirds all of reality. In the twenty-fourth Gleam, Jami said that there were six levels of self-disclosure by the true existent which was not more than one. The first level was the level of unboundedness or nonentification. The last level was ‘the engendered level’s differentiation, which was the level of the cosmos’.³⁶¹ Murata concludes her analysis of Jami’s *Lawa’ih* by saying that

Jami addresses three basic theoretical issues. One is Being per se, the second is Being’s self-disclosure, and the third is the nature of the things that appear through self-disclosure. Being is the utterly undifferentiated original reality that brings forth all secondary reality, self-disclosure is the bringing forth, and the things are what has been brought forth...The text speaks of the movement from the absolute unity of God to the infinite multiplicity of the universe, a movement that has stages and can be conceptualized.³⁶²

Liu Zhi’s *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* in Chinese is a free translation of Jami’s *Lawa’ih* and is far from literal. At the end of each Gleam, Jami provided quatrains which served to clarify the philosophical discussion of the gleam by the use of poetry. Liu Zhi simply deleted all Jami’s poetries in *Lawa’ih*, usually situated at the end of each Gleam.

³⁵⁸ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 116.

³⁵⁹ Gleam means flash. It is Jami’s reflections on Qur’anic wisdom and spirituality.

³⁶⁰ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 154.

³⁶¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 182.

³⁶² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 118,

Thus, Liu Zhi was only interested in the philosophical discourse and did not want any poetry to digress from his explication. Liu Zhi called each of Jami's Gleams a chapter and thus his translated work has thirty six chapters.

The following table is a brief and selected summary of *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*.³⁶³ Observations and remarks demonstrate Liu Zhi's edition, revision and interpretation of Jami's work. A more detailed analysis of the translated work will be given after this table.

No. of Chapter or Gleam	Title of Liu Zhi's Chapter	Observations and Remarks of Liu Zhi's <i>Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm</i>
1	One heart	<p>1.0 From the first to the thirteenth chapter, this work emphasizes the practical aspect of the unity of existence or 'the endeavour of seeking and cultivating the <i>dao</i>.'³⁶⁴</p> <p>2.0 Liu Zhi put Jami's affirmative statement into a question, namely 'Why do you not have one heart and one bearing, reject the things, and run to the Lord?'</p> <p>3.0 Liu Zhi wanted to challenge his readers to be single-minded in their practice of Islam. The reason for single-mindedness is due to Jami's prior statement that the Lord entrusted humanity with one heart only.</p>
2	Collectedness and division	<p>1.0 Collectedness 'means to return from the image to the One with clear seeing.'</p>

³⁶³ The English translation of the text is found in Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 136-209. The Chinese text can be found in Zhou Xiefan (ed.) *The Great Classics of the Pure and Real* Vol. 19 清真大典第十九冊, in *The Chinese Religious History Collection* 中國宗教歷史文獻集成, (Hefei 合肥: Huang Shan Book Press 黃山書社, 2005) 1-20.

³⁶⁴ The Chinese text reads '言求道, 修道之功.'

		<p>2.0 In Jami's Gleam, the text reads: 'they stayed in endless dispersion.' Murata translates Liu Zhi's text as 'their hearts were finally drifting into division.'³⁶⁵</p> <p>Although Liu Zhi's text does not have the word 'heart', Murata's paraphrased translation with the word 'heart' is appropriate and justified because the prose at the end of this Gleam specifies explicitly the spiritual condition of the heart.³⁶⁶</p>
3	Seeing the <i>dao</i>	Humanity needs to see what the Real sees.
4	Alteration and perishing	<p>1.0 The Real Lord is hidden and other existents are illusory in the sense of being transient.</p> <p>2.0 In contrast to Jami, Liu Zhi emphasized the role of the heart in two aspects. With a pure heart, let go with all material things. With a dedicated heart, care for and be united with the Real Lord.</p>
5	Completion and beauty	The surplus light emanates and gives rise to the completion and beauty of the ten thousand levels.
6	Search and examination	<p>1.0 The practice is to guard the <i>dao</i>. One needs to forget oneself and all things.</p> <p>2.0 While Jami used 'soul', Liu Zhi translated this into heart. The practice of <i>dao</i> is to transform the heart.</p> <p>3.0 Jami used 'the bounded becomes the Unbounded, and "I am the Real" turns into "He is the Real".' Liu Zhi interpreted as 'preserving self is preserving the Lord, and portraying self is portraying the Lord.'</p>

³⁶⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 137.

³⁶⁶ Liu Zhi's text reads '卒流於分.' See also Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 136.

7	Storing and piling up	While Jami's text emphasizes constant and unceasing relationship with the Real Lord, Liu Zhi emphasizes preserving 'the heart' and self-awaking. ³⁶⁷
8	Conquering Self	The existent has substance, nature and form. One needs to forget the form, examine the nature and substance. The way of <i>dao</i> is conquering self and leaving selfishness.
9	Conquering the conquering	While Jami discussed annihilation, Liu translated and interpreted it as conquering awareness of external things. The heart should dismiss any awareness of external things. ³⁶⁸
10	Returning to the One	The unity of existence means the heart to be united with the One.
11	Uplifting the awareness	While Jami did not mention the word 'heart', Liu Zhi explained that the uplifting of awareness is by the purification of the heart. ³⁶⁹
12	Real guarding	While Jami emphasized the guarding of relationship with the Real, Liu Zhi focused on the guarding of the heart.
13	Real Being	From the thirteenth to the last chapter, it clarifies the theoretical aspect of the unity of existence or 'the hidden and manifest meaning of the Real Principle'. ³⁷⁰
14	Being	1.0 Liu Zhi edited and simplified several difficult concepts in Jami. 2.0 He just asserted that being had two meanings. They are illusory being and the Real Being. 'Illusory' is defined as transient existence and does not go beyond human rational understanding and manifested images.

³⁶⁷ In the Chinese text, 務必心存, 無令虛度.

³⁶⁸ In the Chinese text, 克己者, 真有勝, 顯於心, 而不覺外物也.

³⁶⁹ In the Chinese text, 隱顯之事務, 淨於其心.

³⁷⁰ In the Chinese text, 明真理隱著之義

15	Substance and function	Liu Zhi replaced Jami's essence and attributes with substance and function respectively.
16	Names and similatives	<p>1.0 Liu Zhi replaced Jami's first, second and third grade of self-disclosure with first, second and third movement.</p> <p>2.0 Jami emphasized the role of light which revealed the hidden into manifested. Liu Zhi simplified Jami's scheme of disclosure.</p>
17	The origin of transformation	Liu Zhi selectively translated and simplified the process of transformation or disclosure according to Jami.
18	The total order	<p>1.0 Liu Zhi added an extra beginning paragraph to explain the total order of the visible and invisible world. Plentiful Confucian terms are used, namely substance, principle, power, vital-energy and others.</p> <p>2.0 He edited the second and other following paragraphs of Jami extensively and deleted all Neo-Platonic concepts. He emphasized that the ultimate existence was the principle and nature of the Real. Other existents depended on the Real for their existence.</p>
19	The subtle container	1.0 Liu Zhi explained the relation between oneness and manyness similarly to Jami but with easier to understand examples from daily living. He followed closely Jami's concept of oneness.
25	The grade of the Real	<p>1.0 Liu Zhi followed closely Jami's work in his translation from the 20th to the 24th Gleams.</p> <p>2.0 Jami gave an account of six grades of divine disclosure and Liu Zhi complied with the six grades and translated them quite closely.</p> <p>3.0 Liu Zhi translated closely Jami's work from the 26th-</p>

		36 th Gleams in Confucian terms.
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Jin, the Chinese scholar of Liu Zhi, has studied briefly Liu Zhi's *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*.³⁷¹ While Murata has translated Liu Zhi's *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* into English and made a few helpful comments on Islamic concepts,³⁷² the following comments from the above table are additional new analyses that Murata and Jin have not noted. By observing and analysing the way Liu Zhi translated and interpreted Jami's *Lawa'ih*, one can deduce some characteristics of Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence and his contextualization of this concept in Confucian terms. Our analysis will be made from both a general and a specific perspective.

Firstly, generally speaking, *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* is definitely not for beginners or novices. It is intended for readership at the intermediate level between the *Three-character Classic* and *Nature and Principle in Islam*. It is longer than the *Three-character Classic* and less difficult to read than *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. Some Chinese literati might be able to benefit and find similarities between Islam and Neo-Confucianism because Liu Zhi used many Confucian terms in his explanation.

Secondly, one of the official Chinese textbooks of Sufism in the Scripture Hall Education System at the time of Liu Zhi is Jami's *al-Lama'at*. The Chinese translator of *al-Lama'at* did not use Confucian terms.³⁷³ The preface in the 1927 edition described the book as articulate. Even Confucian literati in academic institutions might not be able to comprehend. Jin asserts that Jami's *al-Lama'at* and the Chinese translator used the difficult Neo-Platonic

³⁷¹ Jin, *Sufism in China*, 87-100.

³⁷² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 74-77.

³⁷³ A recent edition of Jami's *al-Lama'at* with brief comments in modern Chinese was published in 2001 in Beijing. The style of the translator, Bin Ruan, is very different from Liu Zhi. Ruan's approach is fairly literal. Ruan follows the modern style of verse-by-verse brief commentary, in addition to his own translation. He even comments on Jami's poems that Liu Zhi totally ignored in *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*. When Ruan comes across difficult philosophical concepts, he will explain them in greater detail. Compared to Liu Zhi's translation, Ruan's work is easier to read for modern Hui Muslims but some Sufi ideas are still difficult to understand. Jami, Bin Ruan (tr.), *al-Lama'at* 光輝的射綫 (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2001).

concept of divine emanation.³⁷⁴ However, the primary goal of Liu Zhi's translation of Jami's *Lawa'ih* into *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* can be seen by his free and occasional selective translation of this work and his plentiful use of Confucian terms. Thus, Liu Zhi was aiming to provide an easy-to-read reference book on Jami's Islamic thought in the Scripture Hall Education System. Liu Zhi's work in Chinese soon became a reference book. Both Jami's works presented a fairly comprehensible understanding of the Ibn 'Arabi tradition through Jami, including both the theory and practice of the unity of existence. Jami explicitly acknowledged his Ibn 'Arabi source in the original twenty-sixth Gleam but Liu Zhi simply identified Ibn 'Arabi as a former worthy.³⁷⁵

From the specific perspective, one can deduce some characteristics of Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence. Firstly, the concept of the unity of existence includes the integration of both practical and theoretical aspects, namely the first twelve Gleams and the remaining twenty four Gleams respectively. While Liu Zhi translated and interpreted the exposition of the divine disclosure, he was eager to point out the ethical aspects of Sufi thought. He translated and interpolated the Sufi text with a clear emphasis on *shar'ia*. The first twelve Gleams of his translation emphasize the practical aspects of *tawhid*. Liu Zhi calls such practical aspects 'the endeavour of seeking the Tao and cultivating the Tao [Dao].'³⁷⁶ For Liu Zhi, then, right thinking (orthodoxy) and doing (orthopraxis) are interwoven within the concept of *tawhid*.

Secondly, in the practical aspect of the unity of existence, Liu Zhi had greater emphasis than Jami on the role of heart. The teaching of the first Gleam has to do with one heart. There are detailed teachings on the heart in subsequent Gleams. The meaning of oneness of heart (emphasis of the first Gleam) gradually develops. It expands to mean single-mindedness, purity, dedication and others as illustrated in the above table. Above all in the tenth Gleam, Jami's asserting unity (*tawhid*) is to make the heart one. In Liu Zhi's

³⁷⁴ Jin Yijiu, 'Reading the Chinese *al-Lama'at* 讀漢譯昭元秘訣,' *Studies in World Religions* 4 (2012) 8.

³⁷⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 186-87.

³⁷⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 153.

translation, the unity means the heart is in union with the One.³⁷⁷ The condition of the heart is vital for any successful unity. This may partly explain the wisdom of Liu Zhi in the ninth Gleam when he translated Jami's 'annihilation' as 'conquering awareness of the external things.' Some Sufis might interpret annihilation as the total absence of self and real union in the sense of fusion with the Real. However, Liu Zhi was able to avoid any misunderstanding by emphasizing the meaning of overcoming any desire or need for visible things.

Thirdly, in the sixth Gleam Liu Zhi made a clear and easy to understand interpretation of an ambiguous sentence in Jami's text. Jami used 'the bounded becomes the Unbounded, and "I am the Real"'. Liu Zhi did not give the literal translation. He interpreted as 'preserving self is preserving the Lord, and portraying self is portraying the Lord.'³⁷⁸ Sentences like 'the bounded becomes the Unbounded' and 'I am the Real or He' have been problematic in the history of Sufism because this way of speaking may blur the distinction between the creature and the creator.³⁷⁹

The two words that Liu Zhi chose to translate are 'preserving (*cun* 存)' and 'portraying (*yu* 喻)'. The word '*cun*' in classical usage can have a variety of similar meanings, namely accumulate, deposit, keep and others. A paraphrased translation of Liu Zhi's 'preserving' may be 'taking the Lord into the heart'. The word '*yu*' in classical usage can mean simply to explain, inform or understand. A paraphrased translation of 'portraying' may be 'witnessing the Lord.' Liu Zhi's translation may be understood as 'you take the Lord into the heart' and 'you become the Lord's true witnesses.' Thus, Liu Zhi's translated text gives no possibility of blurring the distinction between creature and the creator. Clearly, Liu Zhi's edition and interpretation is to ensure that his Hui Muslims can have right

³⁷⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 150-51.

³⁷⁸ In the Chinese text 存己即存主, 喻己即喻主. Murata has competently translated Liu Zhi's text which clarifies the ambiguity in Jami's version.

³⁷⁹ One of the most famous sayings of Al-Hallaj: 'I am the Truth' which can be interpreted as "my 'I' is God". L. Massignon, H. Mason (trans.), *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994 [abridged ed.]) 65. Other problematic saying is: "Now 'You' are 'me' in everything." L. Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam* Vol. III (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) 41.

understanding in the sense of orthodoxy which then leads to orthopraxis which is right doing.

Fourthly, the eighteenth Gleam is of special interest because it illustrates the purpose of Liu Zhi's revision and modification of Jami's work.³⁸⁰ Liu Zhi added a single paragraph at the beginning with over 140 Chinese characters. It explains the movement from the oneness to manyness and then from manyness into oneness in Neo-Confucian terms.³⁸¹ Rather than using the Real One, he now used substance. Substance is limited to two functions, namely knowledge and power 'Knowledge and power are the function of the Substance, and they put forth acting and making.'³⁸² Various grades of movements are due to movement initiating from the substance and then the dual relation between knowledge and power that gives rise to further movements. The dual relation of two functions, namely knowledge and power, finds a parallel in the Confucian teaching of *yin yang*. The definition and description of substance is clearer in his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* and is explained later in this chapter.

Acting and making eventually became external things. External things did not exist on their own, rather ultimately 'depend on the Principle, and the Principle is the subtle container of the Real Being's knowledge and power.'³⁸³ Liu Zhi interpolated Jami's divine disclosure and eventual return by using Confucian terms. Liu Zhi gave an additional explanation of the relation between the one and the manifested many by using the analogy of fire.³⁸⁴ 'This is also like the power of giving light, keeping warm, cooking food that are contained in the fire. The fire possesses from beforehand all these powers, but as long as it does not encounter various things, these do not become manifest.'³⁸⁵ Liu Zhi made great effort to help his readers to understand Jami's detailed concept of transformation.

³⁸⁰ This additional paragraph has often been noted by modern scholar including Murata. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 165. However, Yin is silent and just discusses the content of the 18th Gleam. Jin, *Sufism in China*, 94.

³⁸¹ In the 18th Gleam.

³⁸² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 165.

³⁸³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 165.

³⁸⁴ In the 19th Gleam.

³⁸⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 169.

Finally, in the twenty-first Gleam, Liu Zhi again freely made use of contextualized terms in his translation. ‘Obstruction necessarily seeks penetration, whereas penetration does not seek obstruction. Thus, the demand is from both sides, but the seeking is from one side ...’³⁸⁶ While Jami used ‘Unbounded and bounded’, Liu Zhi used easy to understand words or phrase, namely, ‘penetration and obstruction’ respectively.³⁸⁷ The Unbounded is without boundary and thus can interpenetrate. The bounded with boundary may obstruct anything within its boundary. For beginner of Islam, Jami’s words like ‘Bounded and Unbounded’ are ambiguous. Again, the goal of Liu Zhi’s interpretation is that his readers may understand Jami’s text. Murata states that given ‘the general skill with which he translates the text and his wide reading in Arabic and Persian sources, it is difficult to believe that this modification could have been anything but intentional.’³⁸⁸

So far, our above discussion of Liu Zhi’s works may be summarized as follows:

- In his short and translated Sufi work, Liu Zhi’s method of contextualization remains unchanged although the shorter work is too concise to make any definitive statement. However, his longer translated Sufi work, *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*, begins to give a good account of his strategy. His works show intentional effort to help his Chinese readers to understand difficult philosophical concepts. He is in conversation or dialogue with his own Confucian context.
- Generally speaking, Liu Zhi concurred with Jami’s concept of the unity of existence and also the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition.
- Liu Zhi is a skillful translator and interpreter. In his works, he does not deviate from the original meaning of his source although he makes modifications and adds explanatory text. While he may modify certain words, these modifications retain the logic and the meaning of the text.

³⁸⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 173.

³⁸⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 173.

³⁸⁸ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 126.

- In his contextualization, his works uphold the basic tenets of Islam and edit ambiguous sentences that may have the tendency to mislead his readers. In addition, his work emphasizes the role of the heart with respect to the practice of the unity of existence.

4.2 Key Themes of the Concept of Unity of Existence in *The Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*

The second section of this chapter will focus on two major works of Liu Zhi, namely *The Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Liu Zhi hardly discussed the unity of existence in the third part of his trilogy, namely *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*. Only the first three chapters of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* primarily deal with the unity of existence and return to the Real but *The Nature and Principle in Islam* discusses extensively such concepts. The detailed discussion of Islamic sciences in *The Nature and Principle in Islam* is often summarized and reiterated in the early chapters of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. An English translation of these chapters is provided in the appendix IV of this present study.

Murata has translated and examined Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam*. She excels in explicating Liu Zhi's Islamic sciences of Sufi thought and philosophical terms like root suchness, nonbeing and others based on his Persian and Arabic sources. In addition she also consults Ma Lianyuan's *Subtleties*.³⁸⁹ Ma's work is a rather free translation of *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. Based on Liu Zhi's sources and Ma's Arabic translation, Murata is able to find the quoted sources and Ma's Arabic translation 'helpful in clarifying some of Liu's discussions and testing our [Murata, Chittick and Tu] conjectures concerning the Arabic/Persian terms that Liu might have had in mind.'³⁹⁰ Murata finds Ma's commentary most helpful when she tries to interpret Liu's ideas in *The Nature and Principle in Islam*.

³⁸⁹ Murata, *Sage*, 15.

³⁹⁰ Murata, *Sage*, 18.

While Murata's study is based on the translation of each chapter and explanation of the Islamic concepts, Jin's study is a general thematic study based primarily on Liu Zhi's trilogy. The following analysis will focus on the details of Liu Zhi's concept of unity of existence which Murata, Jin and others have not noted or discussed.

4.2.1 The Real Ruler: Transcendence and Immanence

Wang Daiyu often used the Real One. Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* prefers the term the Real Ruler 真宰. It is the real being (實有) and primordial existence (原有). What is the Real Ruler?

Firstly, Liu Zhi stated that the Real Ruler was non-designated. Murata explains that the non-designation of the very beginning has parallels with Jami's *Lawa'ih* concept of nonentification³⁹¹ which is understood as the unknown essence that cannot be properly designated by any name.³⁹² 'In the very beginning, there is only the Real Ruler's root suchness,³⁹³ supremely pure and quiet, without limit and form, not controlled by light and darkness, not belonging to the creative transformation. The Real Ruler is really the root and source of heaven and earth, humans and things.'³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ According to Murata, 'nonentification' is the essence understood as an absolute unity in which no 'entity' or thing can be differentiated from any other.' Murata, *Chinese Gleam*, 119.

³⁹² Murata asserts that the non-designation of the Very Beginning has parallels also with the Daoist classic text, 'The name that can be named is not the name.' See Murata, 'The Unity of Being in Liu Chih's Islamic Neoconfucianism,' *Journal of Ibn 'Arabic Society* vol. xxxvi, 2004.

³⁹³ Root suchness (然 *ren*) is a fundamental concept of Liu Zhi. The literal meaning of suchness (*ren*) is certainly, verily or yes. An alternative possible meaning is 'in existence'. The modern Chinese usage of '*ren*' means already exists and 'yet to *ren*' means yet to exist. Root is usually translated as 'original' and may mean 'without beginning. Root suchness can thus be paraphrased as 'without beginning and already in existence'. Murata uses the literal word 'suchness' and parallels it with the Arabic word *inniyya*, that-it-is-ness. 'In Islamic philosophy, *inniyya* is used as a synonym for existence (*wujud*). Murata further explicates root suchness as root substance which is the Real Being. Murata, *Sage*, 184.

³⁹⁴ In Chinese '無物之初, 惟一真宰之本然, 至清, 至靜, 無方所, 無形似, 不牽於陰陽, 不屬於造化, 實天地人物之本原也. *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, first chapter. Appendice IV. i-xvii.

Secondly, unlike the universe that has numerous and multi-faceted existences, the Real Ruler is one. Unlike the universe that has blossoming and withering lives and seasonal change, the Real Ruler takes no part in such change.³⁹⁵

Thirdly, while the Real Ruler does not change, it is the fount and source of the cosmic existence.

Fourthly, the Real Ruler can express the divine essence through the Numerical and Embodied One.³⁹⁶ This concept of the One or the Real Ruler is the usual explanation given by Murata, Jin and others. However, these scholars have not noted further explanations of the Real Ruler in Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

Not noted by Murata, Jin and other scholars, Liu Zhi further distinguished the Real Ruler into transcendent Ruler and inclusive Ruler in his second chapter of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. 'The One is unique and this uniqueness has two meanings. The first meaning of the unique one is that it transcends all things. The second meaning of the unique One is that it embraces all things.'³⁹⁷

The transcendent One is beyond manifestations. Unlike the transcendent One, the heaven, earth and all things have manifestations. The vital energy then transforms to give out their forms. This is the number [function] of the acquired heaven. The root suchness of the Real Ruler does not have any manifestation. It does not participate in the vital energy's transformation and is not determined by the number [function] of the acquired heaven. The Real Ruler does not have any boundary and physical form, it is most pure and subtle, and is difficult to describe. The unique One means it is transcendent to heaven, earth and all things.

With regard to the unique immanent One, it is unique because this One is not to be separated from manifestation and thus becomes 'unique'. It is not to separate from the many. It creates all matters from beginning to now, both visible and invisible and governs their activities with its real principle. The substance is not separated from its function and it is undifferentiated from all materials. This One

³⁹⁵ Liu, *Nature and Principle*, the fifth chapter. Murata, *Sage*, 144.

³⁹⁶ Liu, *Nature and Principle*, the fifth chapter. Also, Murata, *Sage*, 144.

³⁹⁷ Liu, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, the second chapter. Appendice IV. xviii.

is unique because outside the One, there is no manifestation. Outside this One, there is no boundary. This is the meaning of the immanent One.³⁹⁸

The Real Ruler has two senses of uniqueness: transcendence and immanence. The Chinese word for immanence is *bao* (包). In classical Chinese usage, it can take various meanings, namely wrap, bundle, pack and others. Liu Zhi's concept of the Real Ruler did not support pantheism. The meaning of immanence really has the connotation of panentheism.³⁹⁹ When Liu Zhi discussed the disclosure of the Real Ruler, he really explained the origin of cosmos and relationship between a really unique panentheistic being and the cosmos. The Real Ruler in the sense of immanence is understood to be a panentheistic being that can interpenetrate and include all visible and invisible things. The Real Ruler in the sense of transcendence is understood to be a radically unique being that is beyond any human God-talk and outside the disclosure. The Real Ruler is in itself. Both aspects of the uniqueness of the Real Ruler must be held together. They are inseparable and yet they also must be distinguished.

The Rules and Proprieties of Islam makes it easier to understand Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence. With respect to the macrocosmic worldview, the panentheistic being is in eternal unity with the cosmos because it interpenetrates and embraces all things. With respect to the microcosmic worldview, humans in particular the perfect human being can return and eventually have a heart union with the panentheistic being. It is not a union of two different bodies to form a single entity which should be called fusion. In simple terms, the practical concept of Liu Zhi's unity of existence means that by removing all forms of visible and invisible obstructions, humankind may return to the substance or essence of the panentheistic being and eventually actualize a heart union. This understanding of the unity of existence forms the basis of Liu Zhi's idea of Sufi spirituality. This also explains his emphasis on the role of the heart.

³⁹⁸ Liu, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, the second chapter. Appendice IV, xviii-xix.

³⁹⁹ Panentheism may simply be defined as the belief that God is greater than the universe and includes and interpenetrates it. A sophisticated version of it is argued by a 20th-century prominent Christian theologian Paul Tillich.

4.2.2 The Second Grade of Disclosure

Murata takes great effort to explain the Islamic concepts of Liu Zhi's disclosure. Jin, Sha and others explain insightfully the intricate meanings of various Confucian terms in the disclosure. To our knowledge, no contemporary scholar has noted or attempted to explain the logic of Liu Zhi's argument of disclosure from the perspective of panentheism. Such a discussion is found not in his *Nature and Principle in Islam* but primarily in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* and *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*.

The three major works of Wang Daiyu discuss the concept of the three Ones. However, these works do not explain the immanence and the logical argument of immanence in the divine disclosure. While Liu Zhi continued to use Wang's three Ones in his *Nature and Principle in Islam*, he also attempted to explain the immanence of the Real Ruler. Most probably, he derived such insight from Jami and in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. In the nineteenth Gleam of *Lawa'ih*, Jami explained the inclusion of the manyness in the oneness of the essence or alternatively in the language of Liu Zhi the inclusion of multiplicity in the only One Real Ruler. According to Jami, inclusion does not mean the inclusion of the contained in the container.

Rather, what is meant is the inclusion of the descriptions and the requirements in the described thing and the requirer, like the inclusion of one-halfness, one-thirdness, one-fourthness, one-fifthness, ad infinitum, in the essence of the numerical one. After all, these relations are included within it and have no manifestation whatsoever so long as it does not become part of two, three, four, and five through repetition of manifestation in the levels.⁴⁰⁰

Liu Zhi gave a simplified and easy to understand translation with interpretation. Inclusion does not mean the One Substance is a part contained in a whole.

⁴⁰⁰ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 168. Murata asserts that Jami's source is Farghani's *Muntaha'l-madarik*. However, Farghani's scheme is much more complicated. Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 231.

Rather, it is the substance's containment of the function and the requirer's containment of the required. For example, one is one-half of two, one-third of three, one-fourth of four, and so on, to one part of one hundred thousand billion. All these are contained in the root nature of "one", and "one" has beforehand the power to be the principle of one part of all numbers. However, as long as the various numbers are not added, its power will never become manifest.⁴⁰¹

The basic argument of Liu Zhi is that the panentheistic being embraces all things. The panentheistic being is not a container that contains various parts. Strictly speaking, it does not contain, carry and divide all things. Rather, such inclusion means that it embraces and interpenetrates them. This insight came from Jami and Liu Zhi adopted it enthusiastically. Similarly, the Great Ultimate that is the most perfect *li* as propagated by Zhu Xi, the Neo-Confucian master, might also influence Liu Zhi's adoption.

Such understanding of immanence is further developed and seen clearly in his second chapter of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* using similar easy to understand numerical examples. In the second chapter, Liu Zhi explained the fact that the Real Ruler did not beget or reproduce a son, unlike the Christian God in the gospel. As a monotheistic religion, Muslims believe in one and only Real Ruler. Liu Zhi expressed this unique panentheistic being by using the Confucian term, namely root substance. The following quotation comes from one single section in the second chapter.

From one, it gives rise to and completes the ten thousand. One penetrates the beginning and end of ten thousand. The ten thousand comes from one, completes by one. The ten thousand needs one but the one does not need the ten thousand. ...

The root substance of one (一之本體) is all-inclusive and penetrating. Nothing is beyond it. It gives rise to number but it is not equal to number. ...

The root substance of one is eternally unchanging and unmoving. It generates countless other numbers. The root substance of one is without increase and decrease. It increases and decreases the ten thousand numbers. The root substance of one has no beginning and attachment; it becomes the beginning of ten thousand and the attachment of ten thousand...

Therefore, ten, hundred, thousand, ten thousand and countless other numbers have their source and foundation in one...

⁴⁰¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 169.

The root substance of one is unparallel and nothing likes it. Any number is formed by addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. If you take away this way of thinking, there is no existence of number. The result remains to be the same: one.⁴⁰²

What is the meaning of root substance? Root means ‘source’ and ‘origin’. Murata says that in the common usage of Chinese philosophy, root substance is the unique general term for ultimate reality.⁴⁰³ She also notes that substance is often paired with function in both Buddhist and Confucian thought. Substance refers to the essence and function refers to the names and attributes. ‘Generally, substance is the thing in itself, function its movement or activity; substance is a thing’s fundamental reality, function its expression; the two are typically discussed together and designate a relationship.’⁴⁰⁴

With such understanding of the root substance and function, several brief comments can be made from the above quotation about the relationship between the root substance and the existence of only one being. Firstly, the root substance simply refers to the second grade of disclosure, namely the Real One and may equally refer to the substance of the first sub-grade of the Real One, namely ‘quietness without manifestation’. It should be noted that the term ‘Real One’ does not derive from Confucianism. However, Liu Zhi used Confucian term, namely root substance, to explain the relationship between the Real One and the concept of one unique being. Secondly, it should be emphasized that the order of disclosure or the structure of emanation is a *logical* order and has no bearing or reference to the time line and status of each entity. It should be interpreted solely in terms of the logical sequence of hiddenness and manifestation. As an illustration, substance is inherently hidden. While function can manifest substance, substance simply is manifested as a body-less substance. It does not have any embodiment at all even at the state of manifestation of function. Finally, the above quotation adequately illustrates the oneness and manyness of Liu Zhi’s understanding of the panentheistic being. The ‘one’ is the function and it is embraced by

⁴⁰² Liu, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, the second chapter. Appendice IV. xxix-xxx.

⁴⁰³ Murate, *Sage*, 77.

⁴⁰⁴ Murata, *Sage*, 69.

the root substance of the one. Thus, it is an interpretation of the divine disclosure in Jami's *Lawa'ih* in Confucian terms.

4.2.3 The Unity of Existence and Return to the Real

Many contemporary scholars are able to note that Liu Zhi's works have emphasized both theoretical and practical aspects of Islam. One obvious reason to support this argument is the inner structure of Liu Zhi's trilogy. The first work, *The Nature and Principle in Islam*, discusses the Islamic sciences including theosophy, cosmogony and nature of things. The second work, *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, discusses the rationale and rites of Islam. His work starts from Islamic theory and moves to practice. The final work ends with the origin of Islam and many extraordinary stories of the prophet Muhammad.

The following discussion can provide a fresh perspective of Liu Zhi's integration of theory and practice. Liu Zhi's Islam integrates both the theoretical and practical aspects of Islam using the concept of the unity of existence. The logical order of the various grades of divine disclosure in terms of descent and ascent integrates the two aspects into one single entity, as asserted by Liu Zhi.

The unifying theme of Jami's *Lawa'ih* is *tawhid* (the assertion of God's unity: there is no god but God). The work deals with *tawhid* as practice and *tawhid* as theory. The first twelve Gleams focus on the 'devotional imperative of turning one's full attention toward the One.'⁴⁰⁵ The remaining Gleams 'discuss various ways in which the relationship between the true Being of the Real and the existence of the world and things can be conceptualized.'⁴⁰⁶ It is in this second section, from the thirteenth Gleam to the end, that this work expounds the understanding of the unity of existence.

⁴⁰⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 116.

⁴⁰⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 116.

At the time of Liu Zhi, another work of Jami, namely the *al-Lama'at*, was a standard Sufi textbook in the Scripture Hall Education System. This work primarily deals with the philosophical explanation of the unity of existence and is a challenging work for many students. In Liu Zhi's translation of Jami's *Lawa'ih*, Liu Zhi did not alter Jami's structure, retaining the practical aspect in the first twelve Gleams and followed by the theoretical aspect in all subsequent chapters. Probably, Liu Zhi's concern is not so much to put forth his revised view of the unity of existence which is similar to Wang Daiyu. Rather, his concern is to give an easy-to-read translation of Jami's concepts. This is confirmed by his additional paragraph of explanation in the beginning of the eighteenth Gleam as explained before.

In Liu Zhi's understanding of the unity of existence, he consulted the six grades of disclosure in Jami's work but continued with Wang Daiyu's simpler concept of the three Ones. While substance, function, act, *yin/yang* and others are Confucian terms, the three Ones, namely the Real, Numerical and Embodied One are not familiar Confucian terms. In his translated work of Jami, Liu Zhi generally followed Jami. In his own works, he chose to continue Wang Daiyu's scheme of disclosure. However, Liu Zhi also fine-tuned Wang Daiyu's concept of three Ones at the sub-grade of the second grade of disclosure. At the sub-grade of Embodied One, the following table summarizes the difference in understanding between Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi:

Three Sub-grades of the Embodied One	
Wang Daiyu ⁴⁰⁷	Liu Zhi ⁴⁰⁸
Recognition with knowledge 知認: to inquire about and to imitate what the sages and worthies reflected upon and witnessed.	Recognition with body knowing 身體知認: our endeavour is to comply and follow. It is to know what ought to be done without being able to know why it is

⁴⁰⁷ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 97-100.

⁴⁰⁸ Murata, *Sage*, 518-19. Murata describes the three grades as knowing, seeing and continuity.

	so. At this level we know the name, but we do not know the reality. ⁴⁰⁹
Recognition with seeing 見認 : to transcend all the conditions so that humans recognize the Real with the body.	Recognition with <i>heart</i> seeing 心體見認: our endeavour is to understand. To understand is to see why it is so but not to be able to obtain why it is so. At this level we see the differentiation, but we do not see the union.
Recognition with continuity 繼認 : to conquer entirely both selfishness and opinions of self, returning completely to the fountainhead and recognizing the Real with body while depending on no-self	Recognition with nature, continual knowing 性體續認: our endeavour is to be without interval. To be without interval is to be rooted in why it is so and to be undifferentiated from why it is so; this is the utmost.

The above table illustrates the subtle differences between Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi. When Liu Zhi translated Jami's work, he added the role of the heart in the practical aspect of Islam. Similarly, Liu Zhi's concept of the three Ones emphasizes the role of the heart again at the sub-level of the Embodied One. The heart can acquire understanding at the differentiated level. The *heart* seeing is to understand the world of the acquired heaven. The goal of Liu Zhi's minor revision is to integrate the unity of existence with the return to the Real with the emphasis on the role of the heart. While Wang discussed the heart which has different grades, Liu Zhi put greater emphasis on the role of the heart with respect to the return to the Real.

Liu Zhi used the concept of the unity of existence to integrate his understanding of God's disclosure, anthropology and eschatology together. 'In other words, it sets down the principle of what may be called *wahda al-wujud*, which is to say that it expresses the first

⁴⁰⁹ Murata, *Sage*, 518.

principle of Islamic thought, *tawhid* or the unity of God in terms of *wujud*.⁴¹⁰ The return is a closed system of circular movement, beginning from and returning to the Real One. It begins from a spontaneous movement of the 'heart',⁴¹¹ that triggers the movement through invisible and visible matters in returning to the Real One, similar to Ibn 'Arabi's *Wahdat al-wujud* concept, namely existence and unity.

Neo-Confucianism had a similar concept of movement but in terms of a humanist aspect emphasizing self-cultivation and moral transformation through the teachings of the sage as established by many ancient sacred texts. Since the 14th century and the great work of Zhu Xi, a powerful linguistic and philosophical system with ethical concerns was in place to allow foreign ideas and concepts to be contextualized. Instead of glorifying Neo-Confucianism in the manner of Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi followed the strategy of Wang Daiyu. Liu Zhi encountered manifold challenges. Firstly, he took on Wang Daiyu's concept of the three Ones and improved it to unity in multiplicity and simultaneously also many-in-oneness. While Neo-Confucianism was traditionally weak on theism, Liu Zhi found a common ground exploiting the concept of the Great Ultimate as defined and developed by Zhu Xi. Secondly, he re-appropriated Neo-Confucian self-cultivation for Islamic spirituality and contextualized the meanings of Islamic rituals. The practice of Islamic rituals shared common ground with Chinese self-cultivation. Thirdly, he integrated the concept of the Real and humanity with Sufi spirituality using the concept of return to the Real One. The return of Muslims to the Real is made possible because of who the prophet Muhammad is and what he has done. Liu Zhi always took care to emphasize the unique role of the Utmost Sage. Thus, integration was done perfectly and exemplarily by Muhammad, the holy sage as well as the ultimate prophet.

⁴¹⁰ Sachiko Murata, 'The Unity of Being in Liu Chih's Islamic Neoconfucianism,' *Journal of Ibn 'Arabic Society*, vol. xxxvi, 2004.

⁴¹¹ In Chinese 一念之動.

4.3 Contemporary Scholarship on Liu Zhi's Concept of the Unity of Existence and Disclosure

One of the major differences between Jin Yijiu in China and S. Murata in America is their view of Liu Zhi's scheme of disclosure or structure of emanation. Jin Yijiu avers that Liu Zhi departed from monotheistic Islam. Jin argues that Liu Zhi's pantheism is most explicit in his divine disclosure and Sufi thought. Jin believes that the Chinese school of Sufism was always influenced by the works of Neo-Platonists from India and Persia. Jin asserts that Sufism in China absorbed the theory of disclosure from Neo-Platonism and the purification of souls from Gnosticism. For Jin, Liu Zhi readily accepted these foreign ideas in Chinese Sufism as long as these Sufi Islamic concepts agreed with Neo-Confucianism.⁴¹² Jin believes that Liu Zhi absorbed Neo-Platonism most clearly in his concept of divine disclosure.⁴¹³ The disclosure of the Real as Real One, Numerical One and Embodied One means the fusion of real being with the created world. For Jin, then, theologically by the method of disclosure into various grades and philosophically through dialectical logic, the Real was manifested in the many.

One of the main supporting reasons is Jin's assertion that Liu Zhi differed from Ibn 'Arabi.⁴¹⁴ Liu Zhi did not posit the nature and principle of all created beings within the Real One.⁴¹⁵ Rather, Liu Zhi asserted that the root suchness of the Real was shared as communal root suchness. Since it is communal, it is also the root suchness of *manifested things*.⁴¹⁶ Based on such reasons, Jin then concludes that Liu Zhi's Islamic philosophy is fundamentally pantheistic. In his later edition of his study of Liu Zhi in 2010, his view remains unchanged.

⁴¹² Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 28.

⁴¹³ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 42.

⁴¹⁴ S.A.Q. Hussaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn Al-'Arabi* (Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf, 1970).

⁴¹⁵ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 89. '只是劉智沒有像伊本阿拉比那樣，把宇宙的萬有的性理說成是預先存在於“真”之中，而後再顯化出來的。’

⁴¹⁶ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 88. '但他 [劉智] 把顯化之人的本然視為“各具之本然”，而把“真”視為“公共之本然”，這無外乎是說“以本然而渾入於本然”。’

Another point of view that supports Jin is the modern understanding of Sufism. It is known that Ibn ‘Arabi’s theoretical Sufism was spread through Naqshbandi masters into the Northwestern part of China by the 17th century as demonstrated by Joseph Fletcher.⁴¹⁷ By the beginning of the 20th century, Sufism was accused of carrying heterodox elements especially by Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935).⁴¹⁸ However, Murata in her earlier and recent works affirms that Liu Zhi’s works which ‘provide theoretical explanations of the nature of things — God, the cosmos, the soul — belong to the Sufi tradition.’⁴¹⁹ Liu Zhi’s ‘inspiration derived in part from the specific strands of Muslim thought least beholden to the formal elements of the tradition, namely, theoretical Sufism (what in recent Persian history has typically been called ‘*irfan*, “gnosis”) and philosophy.’⁴²⁰ Thus Murata believes that Liu Zhi’s works are traditional and in accordance with the Ibn ‘Arabi teaching. Liu Zhi got inspiration from this tradition and elaborated on them. Murata’s works give no hint that Liu Zhi’s Islam is pantheistic.

How Islamic are the texts written by Ibn ‘Arabi’s followers and the Sufi texts by Jami? Is Liu Zhi’s Islam heterodox? Several responses may be given.

Firstly, the present study disagrees with Jin’s interpretation. Jin argues that since Liu Zhi’s concept of the root suchness is inclusive of all the principles and manifestations of principles, Liu Zhi’s Islam is pantheistic. As explained above, the unique Real Ruler has two aspects, namely transcendence and immanence. The unique panentheistic being is inclusive of all the principles and manifestations. This interpretation of the divine being is not pantheism at all. Liu Zhi attempted to give a balanced view of both the transcendence and immanence of the Real Ruler. If Jin had consulted in depth the second chapter of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* he might have reached a different conclusion.

⁴¹⁷ See Joseph Fletcher, *Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*, in B. Forbes Manz (ed.), (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995).

⁴¹⁸ Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, 98-102.

⁴¹⁹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 26.

⁴²⁰ Murata, *Sage*, 21.

Additional support for Liu Zhi's panentheism is found in his interpretation of Jami's origin of transformation. In Jami's seventeenth Gleam, the transformation is described thus:

The First Entification is an unmixed oneness and a sheer receptivity that comprises all receptivities ...
It is the level of Unity, and to it belong nonmanifestation, firstness, and beginninglessness ...
It is the level of One-and-allness, and to it belong manifestation, lastness, and endlessness.⁴²¹

Liu Zhi translated it as:

The First Movement is the upright one and the subtle conveyance that embraces and puts together...
The level of the Only-One is the inward, the origin, and the beginning...
The level of the First-One is the outward, the derivative, and the end.⁴²²

At the second grade of disclosure, the unique Real has two aspects that Jin fails to realize in Liu Zhi's translated text. Liu Zhi's translation and interpretation of disclosure is consistent with Jami and in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition.

Secondly, Liu Zhi consulted over sixty different titles in the first two works of his trilogy, fifteen of them of various Sufi works. Murata indicates that many titles did not cover the fields of *Kalam* and Islamic philosophy. She asserts that Sufi works provided the theological basis for Liu Zhi.⁴²³ Liu Zhi's choice of and preference for such sources are significant and in accordance with the spirit of scripture hall education. The Scripture Hall Education System emphasized classics which might be Sufi or non-Sufi works in Arabic or Persian and they were regarded as authoritative. While always upholding the theological significance of Islamic essential doctrines, Liu Zhi's program of contextualization was to integrate theology proper with ethical conduct. That is, while his works do not betray Islam, they should not be tied down by Islam.

⁴²¹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 160.

⁴²² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 161.

⁴²³ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 26.

It is beyond any reasonable doubt that Liu Zhi took the greatest care to obtain reliable Islamic sources available to him through his travel and network. The first two books of his trilogy recorded forty and forty five different sources respectively.⁴²⁴ He was well aware of unreliable Islamic texts. With respect to his last work, *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, Liu Zhi began translating it only when he felt sure his source was dependable. He began his translation in 1710. After over ten years of solitary work and three revisions, the first draft was ready around 1721. The gap between the first two books of his trilogy and the last one is about twenty years. *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* was eventually printed in 1776 after his death.⁴²⁵ It was also the longest work produced by Liu Zhi in his lifetime. By taking careful note the number of Islamic sources he consulted, the efficient network of the Muslim education halls known in Nanjing and other major cities, the common phenomenon of scholars travelling to Beijing and various parts of China, the care that Liu Zhi took to find a reliable source and the time to carry out the work, one can safely conclude that these evidences point to the fact that Liu Zhi was prudent in finding a reliable source and translating the text. His translation, exposition and commentary works are a continuation of his received Islamic traditions in the common sense of the word *orthodoxy* (abiding with traditional view).

Thirdly, another issue is the question of the orthodoxy of Ibn ‘Arabi thought. The following response is an indirect one that comes from A. Knysh’s work. Knysh’s research primarily focuses on the theological disputations between the supporters and opponents of the concept of the unity of existence championed by Ibn ‘Arabi. Knysh asserts that orthodoxy and heresy is a distinctly Christian concept that should not be uncritically superimposed upon medieval Islam. For Knysh, one should take care to safeguard ‘the intrinsic pluralism and complex characteristic of the religious life of the Muslim community, leaving aside significant and sometimes critical nuances ... to let it [Islamic tradition] communicate its own concerns, its own ways of articulation and interpretation of religious phenomena.’⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴See Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 25.

⁴²⁵ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 19.

⁴²⁶ Alexander Knysh, ‘Orthodoxy and Heresy in Medieval Islam: an Essay in Reassessment,’ *The Muslim World* 83 (1993) 62-63.

Knysh pleads that any Islamic researcher should not indiscriminately use the binary opposition orthodoxy/heresy with regard to Islamic history as a whole. Knysh's fair and realistic thesis is that in 'each period and in each region of the Islamic world, one is likely to find a particular blend of orthodox ideas. This blend, however, often proves rather unstable and subject to a drastic change as a result of redressing the political and social balance of powers.'⁴²⁷ Knysh's cautious reminder is appropriate in responding to Jin's criticism and the larger issue of the orthodoxy of Ibn 'Arabi teachings. One should not indiscriminately judge Liu Zhi's Islamic tradition and his transmission without a careful analysis of his Islamic context. Thus, with the support from Knysh, this study asserts that Jin's comment on Liu Zhi's heterodoxy may not be accurate in the context of medieval Islam in pre-modern China because Liu Zhi's works are in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. That is orthodoxy in the sense of abiding with Ibn 'Arabi tradition.

The question of orthodoxy or heterodoxy was not relevant in the era of pre-modern China and at a time when Ibn 'Arabi's theology was at its zenith in Chinese Islam. Scholars who have asserted that Liu Zhi's works were heterodox had to provide more substantial evidences by examining the Persian or Arabic source materials. It should be noted that freedom was needed because Liu Zhi attempted to define and translate often difficult and metaphysical Islamic concepts into Neo-Confucian terms with religious and metaphysical meanings. His approach to receiving and acquiring wisdom is through the person and works of the Utmost Sage Muhammad. That is, Liu Zhi's methodological approach is Muhammad-centric. It is undoubtedly a traditional approach in accordance with Murata's opinion of Liu Zhi's Islam.

Knysh expounds his insightful view further. Various categories may be used to describe a pure and impure form of religion. They are usually described as binary opposites, namely, straight and deviating, lettered religious and popular vulgarized, scriptural literal and symbolic hermeneutics, genuine and corrupted, mainstream and schismatic, conformist and free thinking, and most common of all orthodox and heterodox. Such categories reflect the

⁴²⁷ Knysh, 'Orthodoxy and Heresy,' 66-67.

theological polyphony of the great Islamic tradition.⁴²⁸ This polyphony becomes an axiomatic fact as time progresses. Islamic thought in various parts of the Islamic world is developed by various creative thinkers in both Arabic and Persian. Such progressive development becomes a great Islamic tradition embracing a wide spectrum of Islamic thought. Furthermore, Islamic thoughts and practices need to take root in new cultural settings and cultures. Chinese Islam is necessarily different from Islam of Middle Eastern origin. Contextualized Islam which at first sight may be unrecognizable from the Middle East form is a necessary development.

Finally, Knysh opines that Ibn ‘Arabi and his school can be used as a typical case to illustrate the problem of using the category of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The great mystical thinker Ibn ‘Arabi has massive collections of writings. His thinking is complex and difficult to understand even for trained reader of Ibn ‘Arabi. For Ibn ‘Arabi, his own vision of God is the orthodox view and all others are heretics. The highest degree of knowledge of spiritual attainment is achieved by the Sufi in a state of perpetual bewilderment. While Ibn ‘Arabi is opposed by some who claim that he encourages an excessive esoteric approach, his opponent Ibn Taymiyya has also been repeatedly accused of excessive literalism. Such debate between two different approaches to the interpretation of Islam is a recurring pattern in the history of Muslim religious polemic.⁴²⁹ Thus, Knysh concludes that the use of orthodoxy and heterodoxy is a European interpretative category and not helpful. In the case of Liu Zhi’s orthodoxy and his use of the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition through Jami, Knysh has provided an indirect response which is convincing.

4.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the concept of the unity of existence in both short and long works of Liu Zhi. Previous scholars have focused on either one part of his trilogy or a few sections of his works. This chapter has examined his source materials, translation and

⁴²⁸ Knysh, ‘Orthodoxy and Heresy,’ 49-50.

⁴²⁹ Knysh, ‘Orthodoxy and Heresy,’ 60.

expository works, in particular his *Nature and Principle in Islam, Rules and Proprieties of Islam* and *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*. His source materials are writings from followers of the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition, in particular Jami’s *Lawa’ih*.

After examination of Liu Zhi’s free translation of Jami’s *Lawa’ih*, this chapter has shown that his effort of contextualization is to assist his readers to understand the difficult concept of the unity of existence. This translated work reveals quite clearly that Liu Zhi is faithful to Jami’s text. Unlike Wang Daiyu and Jami, Liu Zhi puts more emphasis on the role of the heart.

Chapter Five:

5.0 Liu Zhi's Sufi Spirituality in Conversation with the Neo-Confucian Context in China

The last chapter has provided evidence that Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence, especially in his translated work, is in continuity with the Ibn 'Arabi' tradition. Liu Zhi did not merely regurgitate the works of Wang Daiyu or Jami. He followed closely Jami's first grade of disclosure but adopted Wang's concept of the three Ones and interpreted the disclosure as creative transformation in Confucian terms. Unlike Jami and Wang, Liu Zhi emphasized more the role of the heart in return to the Real Ruler. The Ibn 'Arabi tradition usually locates the perfect human being at the last grade of disclosure, namely the fifth, sixth or seventh grade. However, in both Wang and Liu Zhi's scheme, even at the second grade of the Embodied One, the nature of humanity begins to manifest. Part of the reason may contribute to the strategy of contextualization initiated by Wang which Liu Zhi then continued to develop.

While the preceding chapter has demonstrated that Liu Zhi closely followed the Ibn 'Arabi tradition, this present chapter will demonstrate Liu Zhi's use of the Neo-Confucian context as conversation partner in his contextualization. He translated a *shari'a*-minded Sufi spirituality into Confucian self-cultivation. The first part of this chapter examines the form of popular literature intended to educate the Chinese about Confucian virtues in the early Qing dynasty. The second part is a detailed study of Liu Zhi's *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* which has been briefly studied in Chinese by Jin and hardly even mentioned by any other scholars in English. This poem demonstrates that Liu Zhi's contextualization is carried out in dialogue with the Chinese contexts and with the goal that the Muslim readers can understand. The third part will explicate Liu Zhi's understanding of the pivotal role of the prophet Muhammad as the Utmost Sage. The final part will explain further his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* in conversation with Confucian self-cultivation.

5.1 Theological Conversation with the Chinese Culture: *Neo-Confucian Classics*

5.1.1. *Neo-Confucian Classics in the Early Qing Dynasty*

While the writings of Liu Zhi are contextualized Islamic writings, the literary form of some of his works belongs to the popular Neo-Confucian classics in the Qing Dynasty in particular his shorter treatises, namely *The Three-character Classic* and *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon*. The *Three-character Classic* adopts a more rigid structure in that each phrase consists of three Chinese characters only as shown in the parallel translation of the last chapter. Three-character Neo-Confucian classics may even have rhymed structure and help beginners to memorize the content quickly. While Liu Zhi's *Three-character Classic* serves as an elementary text of the very basic beliefs of Islam for beginners, his *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* serves to introduce both beginners, Muslims in general and even Han literati to the basics of Sufi thought emphasizing a Sufi spirituality of the *dao*. Although each phrase of Liu Zhi's poem is not three-character, the number of each phrase is either three- or seven-character.⁴³⁰ It has a freer style than three-character classic but still is structured. An example of Confucian classics will be introduced, namely Zhu Zi's maxims (1627 – 1699). It was commonly used in primary education for centuries and is accessible today on the World Wide Web. The purpose of introducing this maxims is to show that Liu Zhi's *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* conforms to the popular literary style of education in 18th-century China.

Three-, five- and seven-character literary forms are commonly used in Chinese education. Zhu Zi's maxims is known as *The Chinese Code of Success*. Only the first few phrases in the beginning of this classic are translated and in parallel format.

⁴³⁰ The literary form is illustrated in the full text translation in the appendice.

Get up at dawn and sweep the courtyard, so that the house is clean inside and outside.	黎明即起，灑掃庭除， 要內外整潔， (4,4,5) ⁴³²
Rest early at night. Check personally that the doors and windows are properly shut.	既昏便息，關鎖門戶， 必親自檢點。 (4,4,5)
When you eat, remember that food is the product of hard work. When you put on clothes, keep in mind that materials do not come by easily.	一粥一飯，當思來處不易； (4,6) 半絲半縷，恒念物力維艱。 (4,6)
One should repair the house before it rains and not start digging a well when he already feels thirsty. Be thrifty in satisfying your own needs, but generous in hosting a reception.	宜未雨而綢繆，毋臨渴而掘井。 (6,6) 自奉必須儉約，宴客切勿流連。 (6,6)

This classic was not written by the well-known Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi in 13th-century China but rather by the 17th-century scholar Zhu Zi. This poem was extremely popular during the Qing dynasty.⁴³³ This classic has 522 characters and emphasizes moral development and holistic family in the context of educating and managing families. The strength of using such a literary style is the ease of memorization because the characters are simple and their meanings are easily understood. Another reason for its popularity is that a few catchy phrases can be selected, enlarged by Chinese calligraphy and posted in public

⁴³² The number and bracket are not in the original text. The number is the number of Chinese characters. This serves the purpose of explaining the literary form.

⁴³³ Chan Wing-Tsit, *New Exploration of Zhu Xi 朱子新探索* (Beijing: East China Normal University Press, 2007) 283.

places. One can notice from the above parallel translation that while the literary structure is not the rigid three-character or seven-character, there is still a pattern of structure. The number of characters is illustrated above in brackets and can be seen as follows: 4,4,5 is followed by another set of 4,4,5 characters. One set is mirrored by another subsequent set of character. Other sets of number of characters in brackets above are self-explanatory. It should be noted that Liu Zhi's *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* resembles the literary form of Zhu Zi's maxims, a more flexible form and yet still structured. Most likely, Liu Zhi wanted to imitate the success of such a literary device and contextualized his teaching of Sufi spirituality in accordance with this popular and well known literary style.

5.1.2 The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon

(1) Contextualization of Liu Zhi's Poem using Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism

Only Jin has briefly studied the poem and is able to note its eclectic content. He concludes that, since this poem has borrowed plenty of Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist terms and ethical concepts, one should not underestimate the erudition of Liu Zhi and his understanding of Chinese contexts in his time.⁴³⁴ The following table will highlight some of the eclectic terms of this poem and give some remarks on his eclecticism. These remarks and observations have not been noted by any scholars in Chinese and English.

Session of the Moon	Eclectic Terms	Remarks and Comments
First	1.0 Comprehend (参悟)	1.0 The verb has Buddhist origin and means to understand after examination and research. ⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 298.

⁴³⁵ The word 'comprehension' has the sense of enlightenment which is a common Buddhist term. Fung, *Short History*, 429.

	<p>2.0 Supreme Honoured One (至尊)</p> <p>3.0 Great and heavenly mandate (大命, 天命)</p> <p>4.0 Vital-energy, Yin-yang, Non- and Great Ultimate</p> <p>5.0 Happy excursion (逍遙)</p>	<p>2.0 The term was commonly used by the Nestorian Christians in the sixth to seventh-century China to describe the Christian Lord.⁴³⁶</p> <p>3.0 Mandate means destiny or the command of God. It is a Confucian term and used in the <i>Doctrine of the Mean</i>.⁴³⁷</p> <p>4.0 These are traditional Confucian terms usually used to describe the Confucian version of creative transformation.⁴³⁸</p> <p>5.0 The term comes from the first chapter of a well-known Daoist philosopher Zhuang Zi's book (c. 369 – c. 286).⁴³⁹</p>
Second	<p>1.0 Suffering world (苦海)</p> <p>2.0 Meaningless encounter (妄緣)</p> <p>3.0 Other side of <i>dao</i> (道岸)</p> <p>4.0 Mysterious gate</p>	<p>1.0 Literally, this Buddhist term means bitter sea. It describes that the sorrow of this life is boundless and binding to all humanity.⁴⁴⁰</p> <p>2.0 A Buddhist term: it describes this life in itself as meaningless and without permanence.</p> <p>3.0 A Buddhist term: one is to stride forward and reach the realm of self-awareness.⁴⁴¹</p> <p>4.0 For the Daoist, it refers to a mysterious gate</p>

⁴³⁶ When the Nestorian missionaries from Syria first arrived in Xian in 6th-7th China, they contextualized the name of the Christian Lord into the 'Supreme Honoured one' or 'Heavenly Honoured One' (天尊). Li Tang, *A Study of the History of Nestorian Christianity in China and Its Literature in Chinese* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002) 129, 132.

⁴³⁷ Murata, *Sage*, 61-64.

⁴³⁸ Murata, *Sage*, 60.

⁴³⁹ Fung, *Short History*, 168.

⁴⁴⁰ The technical term of Buddhist's understanding of suffering is *dukkha*. It also has the meaning of impermanence and imperfection. Edward Irons (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (New York: Facts On File, 2008) 168.

⁴⁴¹ Fung, *Short History*, 413.

	(玄關)	before an entrance. For the Buddhist, the original meaning is the gate for the rite of passage. ⁴⁴²
Third	1.0 Priceless pearl (明珠); seafaring (輕航) 2.0 Ninth heaven (九霄) 3.0 Subtle medicine (妙藥), golden tablet (金丹)	1.0 Buddhist terms to describe the Buddhist way to liberation. 2.0 Daoist term to describe the highest level of heaven where the Immortals reside. ⁴⁴³ 3.0 Common Daoist medicinal terms: Daoists attempt to use medicines to cure humanity and restore the balance of humanity with nature. ⁴⁴⁴
Fourth	1.0 Moon mythical lady (嫦娥) 2.0 The world (凡塵) 3.0 Jade Residence (玉樓) 4.0 Great Void 太虛	1.0 A very popular mythical figure in Chinese folklore: she resides in the moon ⁴⁴⁵ 2.0 Literally, it means the world of dust and may mean the world that inflicts hard work. The word is used by both Buddhists and Daoists. 3.0 A common term in Chinese folklore: it describes the residence of immortal rulers and other spirits. ⁴⁴⁶ 4.0 Zhuang Zi interpreted the Great Void as the realm of solitary mystery. Illusion and voidness are also common Buddhist terms to designate the realms of the phenomenal and the real. ⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴² <http://www.zdic.net/c/4/10a/288256.htm> (accessed Aug., 2014).

⁴⁴³ <http://www.zdic.net/c/d/148/320750.htm> (accessed Aug., 2014).

⁴⁴⁴ Russell Kirkland, *Taoism: the Enduring Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2004) 85.

⁴⁴⁵ *Dictionary of Ancient Chinese Terms* 古代漢語詞典 (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2003) 165.

⁴⁴⁶ <http://www.zdic.net/c/9/13c/303635.htm> (accessed Aug., 2014).

⁴⁴⁷ Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 239.

	5.0 Three vehicles(三乘)	5.0 Vehicle is a traditional term used by Buddhists to seek the way to permanence and liberation. ⁴⁴⁸
Fifth	1.0 Essence of meaning (真諦) 2.0 Highest heaven (大羅)	1.0 The term originates from Buddhism. Such comprehension can explain the root of mystery. ⁴⁴⁹ 2.0 A Daoist term: it describes the highest level of heaven.

The above table shows only some of the Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian terms. Jin gives over forty five such terms. Several initial comments may be made on the eclectic character of this poem. Firstly, while the first and second parts of Liu Zhi's trilogy mainly employ Confucian terms to explain Islamic sciences and rites, the poem is definitely more eclectic and uses the Three Teachings of Chinese culture, namely Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, to convey the meaning of Sufi thought.

Secondly, the first session of the poem still retains the major Confucian terms that Liu Zhi consistently used to explain the various grades of disclosure, namely the Ultimate, *yin-yang*, mandate and others. However, the poem uses plentiful Daoist and Buddhist terms to describe the Sufi path, namely from the second to the fourth sessions of the moon. Liu Zhi contextualized his Sufi thoughts into Chinese thoughts by using all resources in the Three Teachings.

Thirdly, Buddhists conceptualize the liberation from the meaningless world as a seafaring journey. Their goal is the realm of permanence and escape from the ever-continuing wheel of life and death. While Liu Zhi disagreed with the Buddhist's negative view of the present world, he agreed with their search for enlightenment. He portrayed the Sufi path as a way towards enlightenment or union with the Real. Daoists search for harmony between humanity and nature. Their goal is the exalted human existence. While Liu Zhi disagreed

⁴⁴⁸ In China, the more popular Buddhist texts belong to the Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism. Texts of the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) Buddhism are not common at all. Fung, *Short History*, 399. Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 347. Vehicle is like station which is a term frequently used in Sufi discourse.

⁴⁴⁹ Fung, *Short History*, 403. Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 266.

with the Daoist's abstract view of exalted human existence, he agreed with their worldview which was hierarchical and also comprised a belief in life after death. He selectively chose concepts in these teachings and used them for his own interpretation of Sufi thoughts.

Finally, the goal of the eclectic nature of this poem is that the readers can understand the basic message of Sufi thought. Simply put, Liu Zhi encouraged what he saw as orthodoxy, namely the right understanding of Islam. Theoretical Sufism as described in Jami's works and its corresponding Chinese translated works is not easily accessible and it is difficult for Muslims in general to understand it. This poem is a short Sufi work and readily available in the mosque and scripture hall. It uses very familiar Chinese eclectic terms and thus easy for readers to memorize. Liu Zhi was not afraid to employ various terms of the Three Teachings. Thus, Liu Zhi's contextualization is in active dialogue with his Chinese contexts and he regarded the Three Teachings as his conversation partners.

(2) The Chiastic Structure of the Poem

The full English translation of the poem is provided in the Appendix I.⁴⁵⁰ The translation is in a parallel format to illustrate the literary form which shows a clear chiastic structure which has not been noted in any previous scholarship. Jin has discussed the poem briefly⁴⁵¹ but few Chinese and English scholars analyse it in depth. The first session (1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) of the moon is in clear contrast with the final session ('1.3, '1.2 and '1.1). The contrast is between the creative transformation of the Real Being and the return to the Real Being. The second session expounds the need to seek for the way, i.e. *dao*, and in contrast the fourth session emphasizes various methods of Islamic endeavour. The key to the poem is the mid-third session. Sufism begins with the heart and go on to manifest itself in action resembling a seafaring journey with the goal of homebound journey to the Real Being.

⁴⁵⁰ There are many versions with minor variations available in books and on the World Wide Web. We use the same version as Jin. See Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 323-24.

⁴⁵¹ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 286-98.

1.1 Undifferential Being

1.2 Ultimate Nonbeing and Great Ultimate

1.3 Divine predestination and human religious endeavour

2.1 The meaninglessness of life and daily activities

2.2 The need for discipline and seeking of *dao*

2.3 The need for the Sufi master to direct the right way

3.1 The *dao* in the heart-mind

3.2 **The Sufi seafaring journey**

‘3.1 Vision experience and life healing

‘2.3 The possibility of heavenly and earthly union

‘2.2 The need to eliminate any turbid substance

‘2.1 The need for three vehicles and endeavours to achieve real
humanity

‘1.3 The eschatological ending by union of both divine and human

‘1.2 Descent, ascent and the union of the arcs

‘1.1 Return to the non-differential Real Being

Some preliminary observations can be made. In the first session of the moon, Liu Zhi expounded his concept of creative transformation. This provides the theological basis for humankind to strive for religious endeavor. He briefly discussed the characteristics of the Real Being and how it transformed the world of principle, the innate heaven, the world of guise/image and the disclosure in the acquired heaven. In the state of non-differentiation, the Real Being is hidden and tranquil. There is no substance, function and act. Yet the Real Being is truly eternal, unlimited without beginning or end. The manifestation began when the Real Being began to differentiate. The use of Neo-Confucianized terms is clearly demonstrated by employing terms like the Great Ultimate, Ultimate Nonbeing and the relationship between the two concepts. Such a familiar Chinese concept has the power of

contextualizing the transformation using Neo-Confucian terms. Liu Zhi equated the Real Being with the Neo-Confucian concept of Ultimate Nonbeing. The first session ends forcibly with the need to pursue religious endeavor. Eventually, the ensuing eschatological event of judgment and reward will be the end.

The second session takes up the preceding argument of the last session by emphasizing the reality that one should take seriously the Sufi endeavor. For Liu Zhi, such an endeavour should be undertaken by every Muslim. The first part of this session explains the meaninglessness of the present life. The mid part emphasizes the importance of the *dao*. The end brings out the importance of the Sufi master for guidance in seeking the right endeavour.

In the third session, Liu Zhi moves from the external ritual observance to internal purity in pursuit of religious endeavour. At the ending of this session, Liu Zhi emphasized that the *dao* dwells inside humanity. This is also the part where Liu Zhi employed the Sufi wisdom. As illustrated from the chiasmic diagram, the central theme is clearly the seeking of the pearl treasure, starting off the seafaring journey and ending with the return by ascent to the homeland.

The fourth session begins with a very popular Chinese moon lady myth but still continues to emphasize the Sufi pursuit, both external rituals and inner spirituality. This is a genuine contextualization of Islamic wisdom with Chinese folklore, not just a mere intellectual Neo-Confucianism in that the moon legend story has been deeply rooted in the Chinese seasonal mid-Autumn festival celebration. The fourth session has literary parallels with the second session in that it pours contempt on all the meaninglessness of this present life.

The fifth session begins with Islam's eschatological return emphasizing the concept of return to the Real Being. The theme of descent and ascent is like the descending and ascending arc. While the creative transformation begins with the Real Being, the return is by both divine and human and forms the eventual enclosed whole circle.

(3) Comments and Analysis of the Poem

Firstly, it should be noted that Liu Zhi's *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* is extremely popular even today not only within the Xi Dao Tang Scripture Hall Education System of the Hui Muslims in Northwest China but also in other branches of Chinese Islam. An abstract of the poem in two literary parallel stanzas may sometimes be hung on the side wall at the mosque entrance gate. Sometimes, the poem is sculptured onto a stele or hard wood e.g. in Yunnan province. In the province of Gansu, it is found that the whole poem was hung on a wall in a Hui community of Ningxia. Muslim children memorize the poem which they have learnt from their parents by oral tradition even though children may not know the meaning of the poem. Islamic themes are progressively developed from the first session to the end, i.e. the nature of Real Being, creative transformation, role of the heart, endeavour, seeking, revealing *dao*, teaching *dao*, sapientia in terms of upward path,⁴⁵² nurturing inner nature,⁴⁵³ bearing fruits and end time return to the Real Being. All these themes are expounded in greater depth in Liu Zhi's trilogy. While the prophet Muhammad is not explicitly mentioned, there is particular emphasis on seeking a Sufi master and being guided by him forward onto the mystical path.

Secondly, the literary format of the poem closely resembles the late Ming and early Qing Neo-Confucian or Daoist poem. The poem does not fall into the rigid literary and rhyming requirement of Neo-Confucian poetry which has strict literary structure and rhyming rules. Nevertheless, the literary form of Liu Zhi's poem is carefully crafted and tightly arranged. The usual format of Neo-Confucian poems has phrases consisting of three, five, six and seven characters as illustrated in the beginning of this chapter. However, the first, second and third stanza of each session of the moon is structured tightly. The following parallel translation of the first stanza of the first session of the moon is provided below to illustrate the literary form.

⁴⁵² In Chinese 登宵.

⁴⁵³ In Chinese 養性.

<p>In the beginning of the first session, the moon begins to appear. Comprehend the Real Ruler that has no form or image. Its subtlety is not known and is non-designated. It has no boundary and exists as the real reality.⁴⁵⁴</p> <p>It is unique without beginning and end; the Supreme Honoured one without any partner.</p> <p>Creative transformation begins.</p> <p>Principle and image are completed. The great mandate is installed and there is an open door to other forms of creation.</p>	<p>一更初，月正生，參悟真宰無影形。 (3, 3, 7)⁴⁵⁵</p> <p>妙難喻，無所稱。不落方所乃實真。 (3, 3, 7)</p> <p>永活亙古無終始，獨一無偶唯至尊， (7, 7)</p> <p>開造化，理象成，大命立開眾妙門。 (3, 3, 7)</p>
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Liu Zhi's poem consists of a number of characters in the sequence of 3, 3, 7; 3, 3, 7; 7, 7; 3, 3, 7 in each of the three stanzas of each session. This is illustrated in numbers within the bracket in the table above. Each stanza of the poem has eleven phrases and has exactly a total of fifty three Chinese characters; six phrases of three-character and five phrases of seven-character. This sequence of the number of Chinese characters is repeated for the rest of the whole poem, namely fifteen such stanzas (three stanzas in each session and five sessions in all). Undoubtedly, the poem can be sung in different catchy musical tunes for easy memorization. Phrases and sentences are short. The meaning of each Chinese character is concise but when putting three- or seven-characters together, the phrase has profound linguistic versatility. The three-character phrases are catchy and can be memorized easily. The seven-character phrases can convey more difficult theological concepts and expound metaphysical thoughts. It is due to Liu Zhi's mastery of literary

⁴⁵⁴ The great transformation in the beginning session of the moon follows closely the initial stage of the great transformation of the Real in the first chapter of Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam*. It is also in continuation with Wang Daiyu's concept of great transformation.

⁴⁵⁵ The number and brackets are not in the original text. The number is the number of Chinese characters. This serves the purpose of explaining the literary form.

devices that many preface writers of his works praised the artistic and literary achievement of Liu Zhi's writings.

Thirdly, Liu Zhi contextualized Sufi ideas in terms of three vehicles.⁴⁵⁶ A vehicle bears a load. With the vehicle, the seekers can carry all manner of standards and morals. Thus, a vehicle embodies the law of rituals. According to Liu Zhi, the first vehicle is the ritual, second is the path and third is truth.⁴⁵⁷

The first is called the vehicle of ritual (*shari'a*). It consists of both the way of heaven and the way of humanity. It is the regulation of every matter and act. This is the means of adopting the law for the one who is diligent in cultivating virtue and who respects his own vocation.⁴⁵⁸ The vehicle of path (*tariqa*) is the second vehicle. It is the stage of the law that fully contains the universal principle of humankind and of all phenomena, as well as the completion of human potentiality in accordance with heaven. This is the means of adopting the law for the one who probes into principle and completes nature.⁴⁵⁹ The third vehicle is the truth or principle (*haqiqa*). It fully contains the concept of 'no-self' and 'no-thing'. It contains the subtle words and the symbolic language of the total integration of humankind and heaven. This is the means of adopting the law for the one who restrains his ego and fulfils the truth.⁴⁶⁰ These three vehicles are under the totality of the law of vehicles which transcends even the highest of the spiritual levels. The law of three vehicles is the method of disciplining selfish desires. Yet, above the three vehicles there is the single law of a

⁴⁵⁶ In Chinese 三乘. Jin asserts that the concept of three vehicles is often expressed in terms of boat, sea and treasure or seed, tree and fruit. Jin, *Sufism in China*, 167.

⁴⁵⁷ 一曰禮，二曰道，三曰真。禮者，日用肆應之儀則也，實踐之于其身。道者，卻物還真之趨向也，實踐之于其心。真者，即本然，合而為禮與道之實際也，實踐之于其性。實踐之于其性，即實踐之于本然矣。乘，載也。載諸法義，以備求道者次第取法也。初曰禮乘，總載天道人道，一切事功之條例，此勸德敬業者所取法也。進曰道乘，總載人理物理，盡人合天之法程，此窮理盡性者所取法也。終曰理乘，又名真乘，總載無理，天人一致之微言，此克己完真者所取法也。勸德敬業所以修身也，窮理盡性所以明心；心不明，不可以見性；性不見，不可以合天。性之不可見，己私之蔽也。三乘之法，己私之礪也。三乘之上更有超乘一法，則天人化矣，名迹泯矣，非語言文字可傳，待其人自會耳已。

⁴⁵⁸ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 180.

⁴⁵⁹ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 182.

⁴⁶⁰ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 183.

supreme, transcendent vehicle, by which heaven and man may be transformed and merged. At this level names and appearances are dissolved. This state cannot be communicated by spoken or written language. Only the individual himself can fully understand it, and then only experientially.⁴⁶¹ This single law is used by Liu Zhi as a supreme vehicle, rather than the *shari'a* used by the Sufi master.

Frankel notes that Liu Zhi's law of three vehicles bears resemblance to Sufi discourse. 'The hierarchy of spiritual progress as described in Sufi literature is generally divided into three ascending, interdependent levels.'⁴⁶² As Jin puts it, the three vehicle law is often compared to different analogies e.g. firstly the analogy of an orange consisting of the peel, orange slice and the seed; secondly the analogy of a tree consisting of the seed, the stem and fruit; lastly the analogy of an egg consisting of the egg shell, egg white and the yoke. Other scholars classify the three vehicles as the boat, sea and the pearl treasure. The purpose of boarding the boat is to launch it into the sea. It symbolizes that the search involves hard work and strenuous striving with the need for courage in taking on risks.⁴⁶³

In Jin's study of Sufism in China, he avers that Islamic scholars in 16th-19th century China often affirmed three vehicles, occasionally even four vehicles.⁴⁶⁴ These Muslim literati, including Liu Zhi, expounded the three vehicles idea in their own particular ways or expressions. The difference among them was minor and might be due to their respective sources or schools of Sufism. They agreed that the concept of three vehicles was an overarching principle of Sufism. Jin argues that 'from low level striving for higher level, the ultimate purpose [of seekers] is to seek the pearl, the manifestation of real light and obtain what the holy sage has obtained.'⁴⁶⁵ While Liu Zhi's trilogy discusses generally Sufi thought and spirituality using the concept of the unity of existence and return to the Real Ruler through rules and proprieties of Islam, *The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon* clearly gives more emphasis on the characteristics of the Sufi way.

⁴⁶¹ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 184.

⁴⁶² Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 179.

⁴⁶³ Jin, *Sufi Mysticism of Islam*, 78-79.

⁴⁶⁴ Jin, *Sufism in China*, 165.

⁴⁶⁵ Jin, *Sufism in China*, 167.

Fourthly, Liu Zhi's work emphasizes practical knowledge. Islamic wisdom is not so much about mystical paths. Rather, wisdom concerns daily Islamic living as a true Muslim. As a result of his editing work, Liu Zhi was able to present Chinese Islam in a way that was more easily acceptable by both the Qing ruling elites and the ubiquitous Hans. Simultaneously, he also convinced his own Hui Muslims that Islamic faith was creditable. On the one hand, Chinese Muslim literati like Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, reformed the Islamic tradition by transmitting texts into Chinese and that facilitated the propagation of the Islamic faith. On the other hand, Muslim literati who were competent in Neo-Confucianism also might excel in the Qing examination system. By directly competing with other Chinese literati and excelling, they could earn official posts in the government. Thus, Chinese Muslims could raise their social status, join the status quo and simultaneously increase the acceptability of Islam in China. For survival and propagation, it was desirable for Liu Zhi and others to be both Muslims and Neo-Confucian literati.

Fifthly, an important and specific point of contextualization should be noted with reference to the key concept of seafaring journey in the chiasitic structure of Liu Zhi's poem. Liu Zhi made modification and revision of a Buddhist concept. The middle stanza of the third session of the moon is translated as follows:

In the mid third session, the moon is moving. A treasure pearl hides at the seabed. Stride quickly towards the journey and set sail for the sea. The turbulent waves keep coming as if you are being sucked into a dragon's den. You are tormented by limitless sufferings. Yet, the reward is to reap the priceless treasure pearl. Be alert and stand firm to defend. Don't fool around. For wealth and honour, seek to return back to the home country.⁴⁶⁶

The seafaring journey and attempt to land on the other shore are a common theme in Chinese Buddhism. The Buddhist way of living is to realize the meaningless value of materials in the transient world, practice regular meditation, cumulate merits of good work and secure eternal permanence in this life or afterlife. This way of contemplative and non-

⁴⁶⁶ Appendice I.iii-iv.

competitive living is described figuratively as a seafaring journey. Landing on the other shore is described as the attachment to the realm of permanence. The Buddhist teacher Dao Sheng (c.374 – c. 434) in 5th-century China believed that sudden enlightenment and reaching the other shore of the sea journey were possible in this life. Fung explains Dao's teaching as follows:

The Buddhists use the metaphor of “reaching the other shore” to express the idea of achieving *Nirvana*. Tao-sheng [Dao Sheng] says: “As to reaching the other shore, if one reaches it, one is not reaching the other shore. Both not-reaching and not-not-reaching are really reaching. This shore here means birth and death; the other shore means *Nirvana*. ... The world of Buddha is simply here in this present world.”⁴⁶⁷

Dao's work asserts that humans have Buddha-nature originally within them. By learning and practising the Buddhist way of living, humans can ‘see’ their own Buddha-nature. This ‘seeing’ may happen suddenly and is called sudden enlightenment. Alternatively, Buddhists may also have gradual enlightenment. That is, Buddhists’ accumulation of learning serves as the proper way to free the mind from human ignorance of their Buddha-nature. So, Dao supported both sudden and gradual enlightenment.⁴⁶⁸

Murata notes a *hadith* of Hidden Treasure. She says that God replied to king David: ‘I was a Hidden Treasure, and I love to be recognized (*ahbabbtu an u'raf*); so I created the creatures that I might be recognized.’⁴⁶⁹ In Liu Zhi's poem, the Sufi path is to seek the hidden treasure by a seafaring journey. The treasure is a priceless pearl and lays hidden in the deep seabed.

By comparing the teaching of the seafaring journey, hidden treasure and the other shore as they appear in the Buddhist and Islamic exhortation to endeavours, one can note the similarities and differences. Both of them emphasize the importance of permanence. For

⁴⁶⁷ Fung, *Short History*, 412-14.

⁴⁶⁸ Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 274-75.

⁴⁶⁹ Murata, *Sage*, 44.

Dao Sheng, liberation is the ultimate escape of the wheel of death and birth, namely *Nirvana*. For Liu Zhi, the final goal is the union with the Real Ruler. Both of them emphasize that humans have inner ability to reach the goal. For Dao, it is the inherent Buddha-nature in humans that enables them to reach the goal. For Liu Zhi, when God created the first human, he taught him all the names of God.⁴⁷⁰ This means that the understanding of the unity of existence is innate to human nature.⁴⁷¹ Liu Zhi said at the end of second session that the *dao* included heaven and earth but humans also included the *dao*. Both of them emphasize reaching a goal. For Dao Sheng, the goal is to reach the other shore or to be enlightened. For Liu Zhi, the goal is to reach the treasure and return home.

The above specific example may give some clues to Liu Zhi's method of contextualization. He adopted this concept of seafaring journey from the Buddhist's idea of reaching the other shore. He revised and presented it as seeking a hidden treasure in the deep seabed. He further modified the Buddha-nature in Buddhists and the seafaring journey as a Sufi path with the goal of the self-realization and return to the Real. Liu Zhi adopted the similarities but rejected the differences between Islam and Buddhism. His contextualization is carried out skillfully by using the language of the Chinese contexts and communicating a Sufi concept.

A question may be asked. Should Liu Zhi adopt the Confucian spiritual cultivation rather than the Buddhist enlightenment to explain the Sufi path in his poem? This is a valid question as Liu Zhi contextualized Islamic rites primarily in Confucian terms in his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Two possible answers may be given. Firstly, the linguistic power of a poem is to communicate powerfully a message with various images. The description of the roaring sea, the deep seabed, the hidden treasure and a light ship in this part of the poem can add to the drama of the seafaring journey or the Sufi path. Liu Zhi's adoption of the Buddhist's concept may be due to the literary device of the poem. The second answer may even be more plausible. The concern of the poem is to teach the Sufi path and it is a poem

⁴⁷⁰ Murata, *Sage*, 45.

⁴⁷¹ Murata, *Sage*, 42.

of Sufism. Through the three vehicles (in the third stanza of the fourth session) or the rites of Islam, the Sufi can achieve self-realization. This is orthopraxis which is not merely intellectual or legalistic practice alone. This is right doing in the Sufi way. Liu Zhi adopted the Buddhist imagery of journey because it explained the Sufi way better than the Confucian spiritual cultivation. Fung explained the difference in spiritual practice between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism: ‘while the Buddha must promote his spiritual cultivation outside of society and the human world, the Sage must do so within these bonds.’⁴⁷² Basically, the goal of self-realization of Sufis is not sagehood that emphasizes harmonious relationship within human society and between humanity and the world. The goal of self-realization is union with the Real Ruler. Thus, the Sufi goal is similar to Buddhism in that it primarily focuses on the Sufis themselves and their realizations. This may explain another aspect of Liu Zhi’s contextualization. He adopted a Chinese context that was most appropriate for his poem. While Liu Zhi explained Islamic concepts primarily in Confucian terms, he was erudite enough to choose other more appropriate Buddhist concept to interpret the Sufi path.

Finally, while the focus of the poem is on the Sufi path, the general teaching of Sufism is consistent with Liu Zhi’s teaching in *The Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. From a general perspective, it is clear that the account of the first session of the moon is a very concise summary of various grades of disclosure in *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. The appearance of the perfect human being or ultimate human is the final grade of disclosure. However, the name of the prophet Muhammad is not mentioned but he is called the human ultimate or the perfect man.⁴⁷³ While the second to fourth sessions primarily discuss the Sufi way in eclectic terms, the role of the heart in self-cultivation is once again emphasized in both the second and fourth session. So, mere intellectual understanding is not sufficient for the Sufi path. Orthopraxis begins with the heart. The fourth session highlights obedience to the Ruler and rites of Islam expressed as

⁴⁷² Fung, *Short History*, 444.

⁴⁷³ John T. Little, ‘*Al-Insan al-Kamil*: the Perfect Man according to Ibn al-‘Arabi’ in Ian R. Netton (ed.), *Islamic Philosophy and Theology IV: Critical Concepts in Islamic Thought* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2007) 151-63.

the three vehicles in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. The fifth session shows explicit 18th-century Chinese Sufism as it discusses the arc of descent and ascent, return to the root suchness and differentiation becoming non-differentiation. Simply put, the basic teachings in Liu Zhi's major works are summarized in his poem.

The existence of the world is not merely an accident but it exists because of divine self-disclosure. Human existence without recognizing the Real Being is meaningless and futile. A seeker's path begins with a sincere and obedient heart. This seeker needs to seek guidance by the Sufi master and he starts with the five pillars of Islam and other Islamic proprieties. The journey has the explicit characteristics of a Sufi path. The seeker practices good works and seeks control of his inner self, emphasizing both exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islam. He should empty himself and arrive at union with the Real Ruler. The above poem succinctly summarizes Liu Zhi's Sufi thought.

It is too simplistic and without sufficient evidence for anyone to assert that Liu Zhi's Islam is sinicized or Confucianized just by a mere observation of the plentiful use of Confucian, Daoist or Buddhist terms in this poem or in any of Liu Zhi's works. Based on the analysis above, it is more appropriate to say that the framework of this poem has been demonstrated to be truly compliant with to Sufi thoughts and the eclectic terms are chosen carefully and selectively as interpretation tool. As a skillful translator and an erudite cultural agent, Liu Zhi was able to contextualize Sufi ideas in Chinese terms. The poem represents a simplified and poetic version of the basic message in Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

5.2 Liu Zhi's Theological Conversation with Neo-Confucian Sagehood: *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*

5.2.1 Examination of Liu Zhi's True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam

This section will argue that Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* is in accordance with the concept of the perfect man in the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. While Liu Zhi

attempted to depict Muhammad as a contextualized Chinese sage for his Muslim readers, he clearly presented to them a unique sage, very different from all the holy sages in the Confucian tradition. Some sections of this work will be translated. An examination of his theological conversation with the Neo-Confucian sagehood will also be presented.

Isaac Mason translated and edited *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* nearly a century ago.⁴⁷⁴ Both Murata and D. Leslie have briefly examined this work.⁴⁷⁵ Liu Zhi's work is most probably based on the 14th-century Persian work, *Tarjama-yi mawlad-i Mustafa* by 'Afif ibn Muhammad Kaziruni. However, Liu Zhi 'also condenses the text drastically and adds material from other sources.'⁴⁷⁶ Mason commented on Liu Zhi's work as follows:

[I]t puts the best construction on all the acts of the Prophet, and credits him with virtues and powers which he himself never claimed, yet adds nothing heroic or noble to a character which has come down to us as a strange mixture of sincerity and inconsistency; of benevolence and cruelty; of self-restraint and self-indulgence; of faith, doubt, and superstition: these are some of the qualities associated with Mohammad, as found in this and other records of the Prophet of Arabia.⁴⁷⁷

S. Zwemer who wrote a foreword in Mason's book, asserted that from the critical standpoint, Liu Zhi's work was of little value because he had added to the story of Muhammad's life in order to whitewash it.⁴⁷⁸ Murata comments that 'Liu Chih [Zhi] retells many of the stories in 'Afif's work and follows the same general order ... he freely adapts the stories to fit the needs of Chinese narrative; among other things, his version places a far greater stress on the supernatural elements than does the original.'⁴⁷⁹ However, Liu Zhi's contextualization of the life of Muhammad is carried out with great care. Zwemer was

⁴⁷⁴ Mason, *Arabian Prophet* (1921). Liu Zhi's work has 20 chapters but Mason only translated 18 chapters and deleted the rest because he said that sufficient account had been given of the life of the prophet Muhammad to give the English readers a fair view of Muhammad as known to Muslims in China. Mason, *Arabian Prophet*, 264. The chapter division in Mason's translation and that in Liu Zhi's differs slightly but the main bulk concerns the life stories of Muhammad.

⁴⁷⁵ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 34.

⁴⁷⁶ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 34.

⁴⁷⁷ Mason, *Arabian Prophet*, 264.

⁴⁷⁸ Mason, *Arabian Prophet*, ii.

⁴⁷⁹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 34.

mistaken in saying that this work was of little value as it accorded with the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition of the idea of the perfect man. Such work may contribute to a better understanding of the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition in 18th-century China and the model of contextualization undertaken by Liu Zhi.

Murata affirms the significance of the unique nature of Muhammad (nature of continuity, 繼性) in the works of Liu Zhi. Firstly, the concept of the perfect man in the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition forms the background of Liu Zhi’s understanding of humanity in his *Nature and Principle in Islam*.⁴⁸⁰ In chapter four of *The Nature and Principle in Islam*, Liu Zhi used the term ‘human ultimate’ (人極). In Neo-Confucian thought, the human ultimate is one who unites with the Great Ultimate (太極).⁴⁸¹

Secondly, Murata also distinguishes between Muhammadan Reality and Spirit. What is Muhammadan Reality? Murata says that ‘In Ibn ‘Arabi’s terms, the Muhammadan Reality is the Logos as uncreated root of all things, embracing and comprising all the divine names and attributes in an undifferentiated, unitary manner; it is a prototype of the whole cosmos in divinis, and is no different from God himself.’⁴⁸² What is the Muhammadan Spirit? The Muhammadan Reality gives rise to the Muhammadan Spirit.⁴⁸³ The Muhammadan Spirit is the mandate which is neither God nor creation and stands between Real Being and absolute nothingness.⁴⁸⁴ It also brings God and others together.⁴⁸⁵ God began the process of creation by the Muhammadan Spirit which Liu Zhi called the nature of the Utmost Sage.⁴⁸⁶ Thus,

⁴⁸⁰ S. Murata, ‘Liu Zhi’s Understanding of the Human Ultimate,’ *Journal of Hui Muslim Minorities Studies*, 62 (2006) 17.

⁴⁸¹ S. Murata, ‘Unity of Cosmogony between Islam and Neo-Confucianism in Liu Zhi’s *Nature and Principle in Islam*,’ *Researches on the Hui* 48 (2002) 12. See also the comment by Tu Weiming in Murata’s *Sage*, 613.

⁴⁸² Murata, *Sage*, 216.

⁴⁸³ Murata, *Sage*, 262. Murata says that ‘from the viewpoint of the Descending Arc, the seed of all principles and vital energies — the Muhammadan Reality or Logos — gives rise to the Ascribed or Muhammadan Spirit (Mandate), which embraces all natures and principles.’ The Mandate has two aspects, namely ontological and moral. ‘The Mandate is the means whereby Heaven bestows nature, and nature gives us our humanity ... we need to cultivate our souls, polish our hearts, and clarify our root substance. The only way to do so is to follow the teaching of the sages.’ Murata, *Sage*, 63.

⁴⁸⁴ Murata, *Sage*, 216.

⁴⁸⁵ Murata, *Sage*, 272.

⁴⁸⁶ Murata, *Sage*, 58, 207.

the significance of the person of Muhammad is his nature which is known as the nature of the continuity (繼性) of the Utmost Sage. This nature is related not directly to the Muhammadan Reality but the Muhammadan Spirit. This Spirit is often known as the mandate (literal: destiny) which is a common Confucian term.

Liu Zhi followed the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabi through Razi’s work and asserted the unique role of the nature of the continuity of Muhammad both in the innate and the acquired heaven. Liu Zhi’s depiction of the life and record of Muhammad in his *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* was consistent with his earlier teaching of the human ultimate in *The Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* but in simpler narratives and short discourses.

The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam is divided into twenty chapters with the first chapter as the introduction. This introduction is important as it highlights the unique importance of Muhammad in Islam. It provides explanations of his uniqueness, exaltation and the unique role of cosmic return to the Real. Most of his teachings on Muhammad have been covered in his earlier works but this introduction gives the reader a concise and simple summary of Liu Zhi’s understanding of Muhammad with respect to the proprieties of Islam and the return to the Real. From the third chapter, Liu Zhi recorded the life history of Muhammad chronologically from birth to death at the end of the fifteenth chapter. The last four chapters are appendices which Liu Zhi himself added. Firstly, selected sections of the introductory, first and second chapter are translated to provide an insight into Liu Zhi’s teachings on Muhammad. Secondly, a section of the seventh chapter is translated about the beginning of Islam in China. Finally, a selected section of the eighteenth chapter will be translated and it shows clearly Liu Zhi’s contextualization of Muhammad’s teachings in Neo-Confucian terms.

In the introductory chapter, Liu Zhi introduced the foundational concept of the prophet Muhammad, emphasizing his exceptional characteristics. The translations below affirm the

superiority of the prophet Muhammad from the land of Arabia and he is very different from any Chinese sage.

The introductory chapter gives an account of the honour and nobility of Muhammad.

Humankind is honourable in heaven and earth. Among humankind, there are sages, worthies, wise and foolish. The sages are most honourable. Among sages, they are further classified into ordinary, ambassador, great and utmost. The Utmost Sage is the highest. Muhammad is the highest sage of all time and of all places and is called the Utmost Sage ...

At the beginning of creative transformation, humanity is classed by the principle (*li*) into nine groups. The Utmost Sage is the highest. After taking the form, humans take on nine groups of image. The image of the Utmost Sage is perfect. His principle is perfect ...

The principle and image of all things are to be found within the compass of the nine heavens and the seven earths. The heavens are superior to the earths and the *Aershi* surpasses the heavens. The nature and principle of the Utmost Sage were situated at the *Aershi*.⁴⁸⁷ Therefore, he is more honourable than any in all the heavens and the earths ...

The ancestors of the Utmost Sage, going right back to Adam, never worshipped idols or prayed to heathen gods. This virtue of the ancestors nourished and cultivated generation after generation, culminating in the Utmost Sage. He is the most honourable in accumulated virtue.⁴⁸⁸

Muhammad is also described to have existence in both the innate heaven and the acquired heaven.

From the time of the ancients, there have been many sages. Muhammad is the Utmost Sage. It is so called because he has all required virtues. His transformation is thorough. Through his whole body, the Real Ruler emanates to become the great function ... the Spirit of the Utmost Sage existed before the heaven and the earth.⁴⁸⁹ He is the fruit of all sages. While the heaven and earth are big, they are nurtured by the Utmost Sage. The spirits of ten thousand sages are under his shadow and they have life

⁴⁸⁷ Murata avers that *Aershi* derives from the Arabic '*arsh*' which means the throne of God in Qur'an 20:5. Murata argues that Liu Zhi understood *Aershi* as the nature of the Utmost Sage. Alternatively, the term *Aershi* means the Ascribed Spirit blown into Adam, the Mandate. Murata, *Sage*, 58-59.

⁴⁸⁸ Appendix II. i-ii.

⁴⁸⁹ The Muhammadan Spirit is interpreted as the Mandate which is a common Confucian term. Liu Zhi affirmed the spirit of the prophet Muhammad existed before heaven and earth. In this respect, the Utmost Sage is totally different from the Chinese sages. In the case of Razi in his *Path*, God began the process of creation by firstly creating the Muhammadan Spirit. Murata, *Sage*, 58-59.

from him. Although he is the descendent of Adam with respect to form, his spirit is really before Adam. His teaching embraces ten thousand teachings. His rule collects and completes ten thousand rules. His way excels ten thousand ways and is upright, illuminates like the sun and moon, as long-lasting as the heaven and earth. ... With regard to his teaching, it has been attested by all later generations to be enduring. Its principle (*li* 理) is clear; meaning is articulate; literary artistry is excellent and above other literature. These prove that the Ruler reveals the sacred texts. Those who are obedient to the teaching, they are not tempted away by any riches and fame. Their ways are not blocked and this truth is proved by all who obey the way.⁴⁹⁰

In the second chapter, Muhammad is described as the integrator of creative transformation from the beginning to the end.

Transformation begins in the innate heaven, initiated by the great mandate. The great mandate is the act of all true principle (*li* 理). From the great mandate, there is the nature of continuity which is the root suchness of the Utmost Sage.⁴⁹¹ All other natures of the sages derive from him, including the nature of worthies. From the nature of worthies, all other natures like the ignorant ... This is called exhausting the nature and principle and getting to the mandate. This is known as the descent and ascent of the great transformation. Likewise, this is also the way of humanity in the descent and ascent. Since the beginning of humankind, only the person Muhammad can achieve the ascent. He embraces the whole transformation from the beginning to the end. Thus, all return can benefit with Muhammad as the goal of return...

Why is Muhammad called the Utmost Sage? How could the Utmost Sage include the great transformation? The great transformation stops at the Utmost Sage but this is not the end. The Utmost Sage continues the transformation to its completion. All individual transformation has its own aspect and is one-sided but the Utmost Sage's transformation covers all aspects. Thus, he can continue the work of the Real Ruler in the great transformation. He returns the transformation to the Real Ruler. He is the man from heaven and from the earth to heaven. He becomes the axis of transformation. Anyone who is not led by the sage's transformation, he will go astray and deviate from the way. He is lost from the real way.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹⁰ Appendice II. i-ii.

⁴⁹¹ Root suchness can be paraphrased as 'without beginning and already in existence'. It can mean the root substance.

⁴⁹² Appendice II. iv-vi.

The above translations clearly demonstrate the superb honour, nobility and existence of Muhammad. Above all, he is the axis of creative transformation and serves as the mediator between the heaven and earth.

In the seventh chapter, Liu Zhi recorded the story of first messenger sent by the prophet Muhammad to China.⁴⁹³ This story has been intensely studied by both scholars in the West and some scholars in China.

In the first year of the Prophetship of Muhammad, there was seen in the sky a strange star, the Chinese emperor Su Wei Ti commanded his astronomer to tell him the meaning. He said, 'there would be an extraordinary person appearing in the West.' The emperor sent an envoy to investigate ...

The prophet sent his uncle Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas and three others to go with the envoy to China...

The emperor Wen Ti hung up the portrait of the prophet and worshipped it, and when he arose, the scroll was there but the picture had vanished ... The disappearance of the picture was due to the wonderful influence of the prophet. The emperor, alarmed, said, "It must really be that he is the Pure Emperor and the True Prince".⁴⁹⁴ ...

The account of the entry of the religion ... is given in detail in several Chinese histories, so it can be proved. The story of the worshipping of the portrait is not recorded in the histories; but it has been handed down by tradition, and may be seen recorded on stone tablets, so must not be rejected.⁴⁹⁵

The historicity and accuracy of Liu Zhi's record has been extensively debated and the consensus of opinion amongst contemporary scholars agrees that Liu Zhi's record above is not accurate. However, it seems that Liu Zhi does not intentionally falsify the record. Scholars in the West and China have given different interpretations according to their perspectives. From the perspective of Liu Zhi's contextualization, it may be enlightened to analyse this story in the light of this whole work. This will be done in the next section of analysis. Another interesting chapter from the perspective of contextualization is the eighteenth chapter.

⁴⁹³ Depending on edition and version of *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, this story might be recorded in the sixth chapter.

⁴⁹⁴ Mason, *Arabian Prophet*, 94.

⁴⁹⁵ Appendice II.vi-vii.

Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* has a chapter, namely the eighteenth chapter, on Muhammad's deeds and teachings. This appendix was added by Liu Zhi himself to make this work more complete. Not only does it record the life history of Muhammad, but also his deeds and words are recorded in this additional chapter. This chapter offers thirty five concise discourses and includes demeanor, virtue, learning, bathing, worship, remembrance of the Lord, fasting, alms tax, pilgrimage, speech, moving and resting, father and mother, progeny, marriage, husband and wife, brothers, slaves and servants, interacting with people, dealing with things, banquets, dealing with disciples, making friends, harmonizing with neighbors, arts and career, pleading, travel, negotiation, healing, divination, interpreting dreams, dwelling, clothing, eating and drinking and visiting the sick.⁴⁹⁶ One example of discourses deals with learning and it is a very common and important Neo-Confucian theme.

Knowledge refers to the knowledge of the Real Ruler. One who seeks is not an ignorant and a seeker begins to learn. Seeking is indeed the beginning of learning. It is not shameful for a seeker to ask questions and a teacher should not withhold answers. It says, 'regardless of age or social class, anyone who can give benefit to learning is my teacher.' Day and night, ask the Lord to give you beneficial learning and avoid unhealthy habits. One rule of caution for the learner, it says, 'if one is close to learners, then one learns. If one works with greedy people, one is lost. Do not take in any unhealthy learning.' Befriend literati and honourable people. Do not let selfish desire blind you. Do not be poisoned by heresy ...

Myriad things are established in sincerity. Make your heart steady, your will upright. Then, things turn out pleasantly. It says, 'teaching is to clarify the way and for the service of the Lord. The way is manifested by learners' humility and carefulness. The principle of things is important as it can distinguish between understanding and misunderstanding. Do not give up even if you cannot understand just one principle..... If you are diligent to learn Islam, you can broaden the horizon of benevolence and righteousness ...⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ This eighteenth chapter is not translated by Isaac Mason in his work *The Arabian Prophet*.

⁴⁹⁷ Liu Zhi, *The True Record of Utmost Sage of Islam* (Beijing, China Islamic Association, 1984) 310-11.

5.2.2 Comments and Analysis

Several comments on Liu Zhi's contextualization of the prophet Muhammad as the Utmost Sage in this work should be noted. Unlike other scholars who examine a few sections or paragraphs, this analysis is based on the whole of this work and also takes into consideration other works of Liu Zhi including shorter tracts and other longer works. The first two comments focus on the introductory and first chapter. The third comment deals with the story of the beginning of Islam in China. The final comment will discuss the Confucianization of the prophet Muhammad's teaching on deeds.

Firstly, in terms of the layout of the work, Liu Zhi began with the honour, nobility and superiority of the prophet Muhammad in the first few chapters. The prophet Muhammad is unique and superior to any holy sage. Thus, Islam with its Utmost Sage is a noble and honourable religion. In the seventh chapter, Liu Zhi's narrative of the beginning of Islam in China takes place at the imperial court and under the protection of the emperor. The spread of Islam into China was as early as the Sui dynasty (581 – 618). While he was not aware of the inaccuracy of his source materials, he emphasized that his sources and evidences were convincing enough. After the life history of Muhammad, Liu Zhi added several appendices to this work. The reason for this addition is most likely his method of contextualization. In the eighteenth chapter, Liu Zhi discussed the deeds and actions of Muhammad. He explained them in full Confucian terms. The Confucian tradition fully complied with the deeds and teaching of the prophet Muhammad. It may be deduced from the general flow and development within this work that although Islam is a very different religion from the Middle East and Muhammad is the one and only Utmost Sage, the rules and proprieties of Islam are consistent with the Confucian tradition. Liu Zhi used the whole of this chapter to emphasize the compatibility. In addition, the approval and spread of Islam was carried out at the imperial level in China. This constitutes Islam as a valid and complementary alternative to the official Three Teachings in China. The narrative and teaching of *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* is itself an outward and clear presentation of Liu Zhi's method of contextualization. Islam with its Utmost Sage is uniquely distinctive and yet it is consistent with the Confucian tradition.

This is a long work of Liu Zhi. The narrative style, easy-to-follow chronological presentation of the life history of Muhammad, mythical stories of death and resurrection, stories of overcoming betrayal, treachery, seemingly supported by evidences, records, date of events and others have made this work very appealing for general readership. After reading this work, Muslims may be encouraged to obey faithfully the Real Ruler. They try to imitate the example of the Utmost Sage and eventually they also obey the rites of Islam, just like any literati who have followed the Confucian learning, not merely intellectually but with their hearts. The story and teaching in this work can reveal much about the goal of Liu Zhi's model of contextualization. He was faithful to the past tradition and yet he skillfully and actively conversed with the Chinese contexts.

Secondly, the role of Utmost Sage is unique and Liu Zhi connected his uniqueness with the ancient holy sages. Liu Zhi was emphatic and consistent in declaring that even the ancient most highly regarded sage like Confucius was not an utmost sage. This is a part of the strategy of Liu Zhi's adoption of the term Utmost Sage in all the works. However, the unique Muhammad as the Utmost Sage is not a stumbling block to Liu Zhi's contextualization. On the one hand, the utmost status of Muhammad resembles the human ultimate or the perfect man in the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. On the other hand, the concept of sagehood holds high esteem in Chinese society. At the time of Liu Zhi, only successful Confucian literati after official examinations were allowed to take government posts. Sagehood is an important status for Chinese culture.

Liu Zhi was not afraid to contextualize the prophet Muhammad as the Utmost Sage because he probably followed the argument that was put forward by a well-known Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552 - 1610) and his followers in the 17th-18th century China that the ancient emperors and sages in ancient China were monotheistic. Such ancient religion was later corrupted by generations of followers and became idol worship. The ancient sages did not regard themselves as divine. It was idolatry for their followers to worship their sages. Thus, the ancient holy sages neither worship idol nor teach any idolatry. Liu Zhi was comfortable in adopting the prophet Muhammad as the Utmost Sage as he set an example of

worshipping no god but God. The concept of the Utmost Sage connects Islam with the foundational and unadulterated teaching of the ancient holy sages of China.

Thirdly, the beginning of Islam in China as recorded in the seventh chapter of this work is a topic of scholarly debate. Studies in Chinese are not as numerous as those in English by Ma Haiyun, Benite and others.⁴⁹⁸ According to Liu Zhi's record, the beginning of Islam in China is during the lifetime of the prophet Muhammad. Similar claims and stories by different Muslim literati were common and generally accepted as historical accounts in the early period of the Qing dynasty. At the time of Liu Zhi, it was a common belief that Islam came to China at a very early time. However, the consensus of contemporary Chinese scholars puts the entry date of Islam at least one or two centuries later than these stories. Almost all of them do not support the stories by Liu Zhi and other Muslim literati. In the thematic study of Liu Zhi, Jin briefly describes Muhammad as the perfect man in Chinese Sufism.⁴⁹⁹ He does not enter into any debate about the date and account of the beginning of Islam in China.

After studying the textual and contextual evidence of the mythical stories, Ma Haiyun speculates that such myths are created because of the expansion of the imperial Qing into Central Asia and Manchu interactions with Turkic Muslims in North-Western China.⁵⁰⁰ Ma's textual analysis is weak and just based on a so called turban-wearing Muslim called Gess who was the companion of Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas in China. Ma's contextual evidence is equally weak and not able to convince most readers of the claim that North-Western Turkic Muslims took side with the Qing army. 'To reward the Hami Muslim allegiance, the Kangxi emperor granted Hami Muslims the right to live and safeguard Su Zhou of China proper and established Hami King ... as the Manchu agent in Hami in the late seventeenth

⁴⁹⁸ Murata makes no comment about the beginning of Islam in China.

⁴⁹⁹ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 246-52.

⁵⁰⁰ Ma Haiyun, 'The Mythology of Prophet's Ambassadors in China: Histories of Sa'd Waqqas and Gess in Chinese Sources,' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 26 (2006) 445-52.

century.’⁵⁰¹ For Ma, the mythical stories of Islam’s entry into China are politically motivated.

A more thorough study based on different *Han Kitab* texts from 17th to 18th-century China is carried out by Benite. His focus is on the study of *Dao* and Muslim identity in the *Han Kitab*. He also specifically studies Liu Zhi’s *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* and the story of sending ambassadors by the prophet Muhammad to China. The key argument of Benite’s work is that ‘in talking about Muhammad as a sage and about Islam as a *Dao*, Chinese Muslim scholars were talking about *themselves* and negotiating their identity as simultaneously Muslim and Chinese.’⁵⁰² Benite’s interpretation of the goal of Liu Zhi’s story is the identity of Hui Muslims. ‘Liu Zhi would not have regarded his interpolation as a ‘lie’. Rather, it was an expression of a meta-truth or a mythical truth, a truth that held that Islam had been in China since its very origins and that Muhammad had viewed China as an important site for the future of his calling.’⁵⁰³

Ma’s view is speculative and requires more pieces of evidence to prove that these stories were politically motivated by the imperial ruler. Benite’s analysis demonstrates with primary texts of the *Han Kitab* that these stories serve to integrate Hui Muslims into Chinese culture. Since Liu Zhi’s *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* is the most well-known and detailed account of the life history of Muhammad in the *Han Kitab*, a more detailed study of this story within the context of the experience of Hui community at the time of Liu Zhi should give fresh insights in addition to Benite’s point of view.

From the perspective of Liu Zhi’s contextualization, Liu Zhi is both a translator of text and a cultural agent of his Chinese contexts. As a skillful cultural agent, he needs to take great care of the present experience of his personal and Hui community. He pays due regard to various aspects of culture, including secular and religious culture, social location, social change and others. To determine an accurate understanding of the present experience, ‘one

⁵⁰¹ Ma, ‘Mythology,’ 450. Hami is a region near Turfan in North-Western China.

⁵⁰² Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 194.

⁵⁰³ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 210.

needs to juggle several things at one time, but it is not a matter of just keeping everything moving smoothly. One needs, rather, to place emphasis on message at one point, while at another point one needs to emphasize cultural identity.⁵⁰⁴ At the beginning of *True Record of the Utmost Sage*, Liu Zhi emphasized the message of Islam in the person of Muhammad. In the seventh chapter, he emphasized the cultural identity. Specifically, it was the Hui Muslims as a collective community in various parts of China for over a century that had traditionally identified the mythical stories as meta-truth during the time of Liu Zhi. In addition, Liu Zhi had consulted different apocryphal histories before he narrated the story.⁵⁰⁵ Within that story, he admitted that a part was recorded in written form and other part was orally transmitted. Thus, Liu Zhi took great care to validate the accuracy of the story. Likewise, Liu Zhi began to write *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* at a time when he was fully confident that he had acquired a reliable source. With great care, then, Liu Zhi read and understood the present experience of the Hui Muslims.

Benite is sensible to assert that Liu Zhi did not believe the story was a “lie”. Liu Zhi was emphatic that his evidence from both inside and outside the Hui community was sufficient to declare the story was accurate. The focus of the story is not so much whether it is historically accurate or even a fabrication in order to promote integration between Muslims and Chinese. If one takes that approach, one begins to devalue Liu Zhi’s *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*. Liu Zhi did not intend the last part of his trilogy to be devalued. The trilogy should be studied as one whole entity. In both the seventh chapter and eighteenth chapter, Liu Zhi gave an account of the friendship between China and Arabia at an early stage of Islam and also affirmed various cultural similarities between Muslims and Chinese cultures. The story is better explained as a strategy of Liu Zhi’s contextualization. While Liu Zhi emphasized Islam as distinctively unique especially in the role of the prophet Muhammad, Islamic rites and the origin of Islam in China may readily identify with the

⁵⁰⁴ Bevans, *Models*, 92.

⁵⁰⁵ Liu Zhi consulted five historical records, namely in Chinese “隋書”, “殊域周咨錄”, “人代紀要”, “通鑑綱目”, “世史類編”. Since historical records were written by the Hans and approved by the imperial emperor, very little historical record of Hui Muslims and other ethnic minority groups is found in imperially approved records. They are found usually in the non-official history, namely apocryphal historical records.

Chinese culture, including the approval of the imperial court, the customs of society and local religious practice.

This explanation of Liu Zhi's contextualization is more convincing than other suggestions that argue for the Hui identity as simultaneously Chinese and Muslim, (e.g. Benite).⁵⁰⁶ On the one hand, Liu Zhi's Islam is unique and different from Chinese culture when he speaks of the role of the prophet Muhammad as the Utmost Sage. On the other hand, Liu Zhi's Islam identifies with the Chinese culture when he narrates the story of the beginning of Islam in China and explains the rites of Islam in Confucian terms. Thus, Benite and others can explain partly Liu Zhi's works. From the perspective of contextualization, Liu Zhi's works are different and yet simultaneously identical with the Chinese contexts.

Finally, Neo-Confucian ideas are explicitly affirmed in the eighteenth chapter. According to the contemporary Confucian scholar Tu Weiming who has examined *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, 'Confucian motifs and themes are pervasive and conspicuous in several of these narratives.'⁵⁰⁷ Another well-known Confucian scholar, Fung Yu-lan points out that Confucius is an educator who emphasizes the way (the *dao*) and not just mere knowledge in learning.

In the *Analects*, Confucius said: "Set your heart on the Tao." (VII, 6.) And again: "To hear the Tao in the morning and then die at night that would be all right." (IV, 9.) Here Tao [*Dao*] means the Way or Truth. It was this Tao which Confucius at fifteen set his heart upon learning. What we now call learning means the increase of our knowledge, but the Tao is that whereby we can elevate our mind.⁵⁰⁸

The teaching of the prophet Muhammad on learning is almost interpreted in Neo-Confucian terms. The aim of Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage* is to ground the teachings of his two earlier works, namely, *The Nature and Principle in Islam* and *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* using the life, teaching and record of Muhammad. Liu Zhi chose his source

⁵⁰⁶ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 194, 209-13.

⁵⁰⁷ Murata, *Sage*, 593.

⁵⁰⁸ Fung, *Short History*, 74.

materials carefully and edited them for his own purpose. The Muslim readers could learn from his account that the prophet Muhammad was both the pre-existent Muhammadan Spirit that existed before creation and the perfect man who set ethical rules as expressed in proprieties of Islam. In this work, Liu Zhi did not succeed in being an accurate historian of the record of Muhammad. However, he succeeded in integrating two of his earlier major works together into a consummate trilogy. That is, Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* clarifies the way. *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* gives practical teaching of the way. Muhammad as recorded in this final work of the trilogy is the wondrous embodiment of both the teaching and way of Islam.

It can also be stated that through Muhammad, the Real Ruler begins the great transformation and also through him that the creation returns and unites with the Real Ruler eventually. While the Utmost Sage is similar to many holy Chinese sages in the teaching of self-realization and transformation, the Utmost Sage is totally unique. One may say that Liu Zhi made an attempt, namely the eighteenth chapter, to contextualize his Islamic practical teachings into Neo-Confucian ideas. However, his main effort in *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* was to do otherwise. Islam is superior and Muhammad is the one and only Utmost Sage. By taking a more serious consideration of this work and Liu Zhi's contextualization, one can conclude that Liu Zhi's contextualization is neither sinicization nor Confucianization.

5.3 Liu Zhi's Theological Conversation with Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation and Wisdom: *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*

It is necessary to elaborate and discuss the question of how *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* actively makes dialogical engagements with Neo-Confucian culture. Comparatively, this second work of Liu Zhi's trilogy is easier to read and understand than his first book *The Nature and Principle in Islam* while both of the works may be scholarly enough to achieve the literary standard set by the imperial Qing court. The readership of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is primarily ordinary Muslims and probably non-Muslims also. The work is intended for those Muslims who are not clear about the meanings of Islamic

rituals while they may be keeping these rituals faithfully. For the non-Muslims, this work provides not only Islamic understanding but also rational and Neo-Confucian interpretations of the cultural and religious meanings of the proprieties of Islam.

While Liu Zhi explicated these proprieties within a Neo-Confucian framework, he also argued for the orthodoxy of Islamic proprieties against the heresies of Christian and Jewish rites. Furthermore, Liu Zhi asserted that the founders of Buddhism and Daoism, namely the Buddha⁵⁰⁹ and Lao Zi⁵¹⁰ respectively were supporters of monotheistic religion.⁵¹¹ For Liu Zhi, it was some of the founders' followers and later supporters who corrupted the monotheistic teaching of the ancient sages. Thus, their religio-cultural proprieties were no longer the orthodox teaching of the founders. Clearly, Liu Zhi followed the successful argument of earlier Jesuits like Matteo Ricci in cross-cultural contextualization. Unlike the later conservative Jesuit missionaries, Liu Zhi refused to adopt the controversial and confrontational approach of cross-cultural dialogue. He opted for both civil obedience to the imperial rulers and simultaneous faithfulness to God.

Liu Zhi innovatively employed an ancient and Confucian concept of law, typically exemplified and embodied by Chinese ancient sages. Liu Zhi's law was the bridge between the way and teaching or between universal and relative aspects of Islam. He firmly linked the law with the religio-philosophical concept of the ancient Chinese sages.⁵¹² By the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Chinese sages were regarded as occupying a special status in their tradition, sometimes, as the conduit of divine revelation. The sage was the bridge between the universal and relative, the divine and human.⁵¹³ Liu Zhi's originality lay in his

⁵⁰⁹ Liu Zhi gave a brief account of the life of Buddha and his main teaching is concerned with the self-emptiness of worldly possessions and fleshly desires. Some later leaders emphasized the doctrine of reincarnation to deceive many ordinary followers. He was convinced that many Neo-Confucians had already condemned Buddhism. *Appendix IV. xxxiii.*

⁵¹⁰ Liu Zhi provided a historical account of Lao Zi's life and his brief teachings. He sarcastically suggested that if Lao Zi was alive, he would have laughed at some of the deviations in the teachings of Daoism. *Appendix IV. xxxiii, xxxv.*

⁵¹¹ Liu Zhi asserted that monotheism began at the very early stage.

⁵¹² Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 189.

⁵¹³ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 192.

emphases that firstly the ancient Chinese sages were monotheistic in their beliefs.⁵¹⁴ Secondly, for him the prophet Muhammad was a sage in the Arab world and also the prophet of Islam. Thirdly, the originally intended teachings and wisdom of Chinese ancient sages and the teachings of Muhammad and Islam derived from the same divine source.⁵¹⁵ In Neo-Confucian society, it was easily accepted by the public and Qing government that the sage was the one who acted as an agent of heaven, expressing its will, implementing the universal way by means of his teaching. Unlike Islam, the Neo-Confucian focus was not so much the divine will upon human social and religious affairs; rather its focus was social order, ethical conduct and obedience to the imperial ruler. The Confucian sage was the infallible guide for human self-cultivation and acquiring wisdom of this world and for Daoists the world to come also. Liu Zhi exploited such precepts of the sage and argued that Muhammad's status belonged to the Utmost Sage.⁵¹⁶ Liu Zhi used the concept of law to underpin Islamic proprieties and actions. Thus, his work became the authoritative guide on Islamic orthopraxy.

While Liu Zhi argued that Islamic proprieties were compatible with the idea of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation, he did not accept full compatibility. He made careful and selective uses of Neo-Confucian concepts. It must be emphasized that Liu Zhi rejected certain Chinese traditions and practices not only on the basis of Islamic rule but also on various rational grounds. He rejected certain Chinese clothing of the dead in special burial garments because there was no precedent and it was inconsistent with the teaching of the ancient sage. The wearing of headgear was not the rite of Muslims only. It was also taught in *Six Classics*.⁵¹⁷ While the prohibition of alcohol and pork were based on Islamic abstinence, he also argued the prohibition from rational, empirical and metaphysical

⁵¹⁴ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 387.

⁵¹⁵ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 197.

⁵¹⁶ Liu Zhi asserted that Islamic prophets began from Adam and ended in the ultimate final prophet of Muhammad. Islamic prophethood had a long and ancient tradition. The role of the prophets is not only to reveal God and beliefs of Islam, it also confirms the traditional five relationships of Neo-Confucianism. See the fifth chapter in Appendice IV.

⁵¹⁷ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 274.

grounds.⁵¹⁸ Thus, he was sensitive to the need for making a persuasive and rational argument, justifying his views to both non-Muslim and backslidden Muslims. When discussing the five ethical relationships of Islam, he interpreted them as distinctively Chinese. He named the five Islamic relationships as the Neo-Confucian five meritorious works and they guided the seekers to return to the Real One.⁵¹⁹ Frankel argues that '[Liu Zhi] went on to discuss the specific details of the Five Pillars, Liu Zhi further drew inspiration from Neo-Confucian ideals of self-cultivation, which he effectively syncretized with Sufi notions of annihilation of the ego and subsumption in God.'⁵²⁰

Two comments may be made. Firstly, it is fairly common to say that Liu Zhi's method in his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is acculturated and Liu Zhi often locates the rites of Islam, the concept of sage and law inside Neo-Confucian tradition, as opined by Benite⁵²¹ and Frankel.⁵²² However, it is more accurate to assert that Liu Zhi's aim is to locate Islam both as an ancient western tradition and a valid complementary religio-cultural tradition alongside all the legitimate religio-cultural and philosophical Chinese traditions approved by the early Qing imperial courts. While both Benite and Frankel made contributions to this observation, they have not noted the Sufi background of Liu Zhi's teaching and more importantly, the method of Liu Zhi's contextualization.

The Neo-Confucian character of his work is due to his creatively dialogical engagement with Neo-Confucian culture in which all Muslims and non-Muslims are located. Liu Zhi is eclectic in that he accepts the contextualization of Islam as long as these various Chinese customs do not violate beliefs or practices of the basic tenets of Islam. It can be concluded that there is no syncretism in Liu's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Rather, Liu Zhi makes a

⁵¹⁸ With regard to the prohibition of eating pork, he quoted support from many classic teachings in Chinese medicinal manuals. Furthermore, pork was argued to be harmful because of the nature and habit of the animal. Abstinence from alcohol was due its hypnotic effect. He called alcohol the mother of all evils. Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 281-82.

⁵¹⁹ Appendice IV.ix.

⁵²⁰ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 261.

⁵²¹ Benite, *Dao*, 229.

⁵²² Frankel argues that *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is the most syncretic work in Liu Zhi's writings. The Muslims share with the Chinese understanding of rituals which are guides to human living. He calls Liu Zhi's assimilation 'unconscious'. Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 206, 372.

great effort at dialogical engagement with Neo-Confucian culture. As a result, his contextualized Islam is appropriate and intelligible to his readers.

Secondly, Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is more than a mere exposition of Islamic law and legal obligations for Muslims. He expounded not only the five endeavours, but also family relationships, wealth, property, dress, wedding, funeral and other commonly practiced Chinese customs. He expounded a holistic and all-encompassing way of religious life. His substantial introduction and articulate explanation of the proprieties of Islam aimed at the Sufi notion of devotional piety, with emphasis on both heart and body, or attitude and action. For Muslim readers, it was the Real Ruler who established all the proprieties as moral imperatives as well as securing inward knowledge, similar to and yet different from Chinese literati who sought self-realization and transformation.

The goal of Liu Zhi's contextualization in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is to affirm the unity of existence by following both the way of heaven and the way of humanity. The first half of the work deals with the way of heaven and the second half with the work deals with the way of humanity. The seeker's final destination is the Real and 'his body and mind dissolve and merge with the Original essence of the True Lord.'⁵²³ The Chinese Neo-Confucians can do likewise in their self-realization by following the teachings of their ancient sages. Moreover, since Liu Zhi's teaching of the way of humanity is fully compatible with the teaching of the Confucian sages, the Neo-Confucians may be inspired to read Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Thus, this work can benefit both Muslims and non-Muslims. The evidence of such understanding is the fact that *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is collected into the Qing imperial library catalogue, namely *Annotated General Catalogue of the Compendium of the Four Treasuries, Authorized by the Emperor*.

⁵²³ Frankel, 'Liu Zhi's Journey,' 336.

5.4 Conclusion

The first part of this chapter demonstrated that not only did Liu Zhi interpret Islamic concepts in Confucian terms, he also adopted a very popular Chinese literary writing style, namely, employing phrases often consisting of three, five or seven characters. Liu Zhi's *Three-character Classic* takes a strict three-character form.

This second part of this chapter translated and examined Liu Zhi's *Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon*. The poem takes a literary form which can be memorized easily for beginners of Islam and is suitable even for children. It has many Sufi themes and a chiasmic structure. The climax of the structure is the Sufi seafaring journey. We have shown that the poem has the ability to communicate difficult Sufi ideas in easy to understand cultural terms such as Buddhism's concept of 'vehicle', Confucianism's concept of self-cultivation and Daoism's concept of *dao*. As a result of Liu Zhi's contextualization of the poem, even Qing ruling elites and other Hans could find Chinese Islam acceptable and not too different from the Three Teachings in China. The poem emphasizes practical Muslim living more than the mystical path. It is 'right doing' or orthopraxis in the Sufi way. Again, Liu Zhi emphasized the role of the heart. Seekers should seek control of their inner self, empty their self-centred desires and eventually arrive at union with the Real. The poem has a clear framework of Sufi thought and the eclectic terms are chosen carefully as an interpretative tool.

The final part of the chapter examined and analysed Liu Zhi's *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* which has not been previously studied by any contemporary scholars. The early part of this work emphasizes the honour, nobility and uniqueness of the prophet Muhammad. Muhammad has existence in both the innate and the acquired heaven. He is also the integrator of creative transformation of the Real from the beginning to the end. Thus, Muhammad is unique and known as the Utmost Sage of Islam. Even though this work is primarily a life story of the Prophet Muhammad, Liu Zhi added an appendice at the end of this work on the moral teachings of Muhammad and contextualized them as Neo-Confucian ethics.

We also examined the scholarly controversy of Liu Zhi's record of the beginning of Islam in China. Liu Zhi did not fabricate mythical stories in his account. It is better to understand his record from the perspective of Liu Zhi's contextualization. That is, Liu Zhi emphasized the present experience of his Hui community. Hui Muslims had traditionally understood the beginning of Islam in China as the true record. His contextualization gives due regard to both the historical records and the present experience of his community.

It can be concluded that Liu Zhi actively dialogues and engages with Chinese cultures in his contextualization. He adopted the literary Chinese writing style in his poem. He interpreted the poem by using concepts of the Three Teachings but maintained a distinctive Sufi framework. In his record of the beginning of Islam in China, he took seriously the present experience of his Hui community, which was supported by certain historical sources, to validate his account of the Prophet Muhammad. Clearly, Liu Zhi is a skillful cultural agent in his Chinese contexts.

Chapter Six:

6.0 Liu Zhi's Engagement with Islam and Neo-Confucian Culture in His *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*: An English Translation and Detailed Examination

In the last two chapters we have discussed Liu Zhi's works in continuation with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition and in active conversation with the Chinese contexts. Liu Zhi's works are rooted in the teaching of the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. He faithfully translated the Islamic text. He also contextualized his Islamic texts by active dialogue and conversation with the Chinese contexts in order that his readers might understand them better.

Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* has been studied by both Chinese and English scholars. Liang and Jin have examined this work in their thematic study of Liu Zhi in Chinese. Frankel studies a few sections of the early chapters of this work and writes in English.

This chapter will focus on the first five foundational chapters of the second part of Liu Zhi's trilogy, namely *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. The goal of this chapter is to analyse Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, chapter by chapter. It will confirm and demonstrate further his continuation of the Ibn 'Arabi tradition and proactive conversation with Neo-Confucianism. This present study offers for the first time a full translation of the first five chapters of Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* in English and also an analysis of each chapter. Thus, the originality of this chapter is based on a detailed analysis of these chapters of Liu Zhi's work from the perspective of his contextualization.

6.1 Examination of First Five Chapters of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*

Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is one of the most important works in Islam's *Han Kitab*.⁵²⁴ The work is divided into twenty volumes, more commonly known as chapters. The content of the work may be summarized as follows:

- First chapter: it is foundational and gives an overview of Islamic theoretical teachings on divine unity, the creation of humankind and the role of prophets. Islamic prophets are usually called holy sages. It also briefly reviews the practical teachings of Islam, namely the five pillars of Islam (or endeavours) and five relationships (much used in Confucianism). Also, this chapter is an outline for all the remaining chapters.
- Second and third chapters: these chapters discuss the theology of the Real Ruler who is superior to any concept of divine existence in Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism.
- Fourth chapter: it explains the meaning of endeavour. To bear witness or the *Shahadah* is a verbal attestation of asserting the unity of God.
- Fifth chapter: it discusses the various aspects of the five endeavours. It gives a general overview of the definition, content and meaning of the endeavours.
- From the sixth to the eighth chapters: these chapters discuss more details of the other four endeavours. The five endeavours are regarded as the heavenly way of self-cultivation.
- Ninth chapter: it is devoted to the ritual slaughter of animals.
- Tenth to thirteen chapters: the five endeavours are the way of heaven. The tenth chapter discusses the complementary way of humanity which is called the five relationships of Islamic ethics. The eleventh to thirteenth chapters contextualize the way of humanity into the Confucian concepts of five human relationships or ethical codes.
- Fourteenth to seventeenth chapters: these chapters delineate the four constants which are residence, property, clothes and food. The fourteenth chapter forbids any cohabitation of the mosque with other religions. Property and clothes occupy the

⁵²⁴ This work is collected into the Imperial library. The collection is known as 'Annotated General Catalogue of the Compendium of the Four Treasuries, Authorized by the Emperor.'

fifteenth chapter. However, the discussion on food is longer and takes up the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters.

- Eighteenth to twentieth chapters: these are additional teachings on congregational prayer, marriage and funeral rites respectively.

6.1.1 Author's Preface: Personal Narrative⁵²⁵

Liu Zhi in his preface made several important points that could help contemporary scholars to interpret this work more accurately, allowing scholars to approach this work as Liu Zhi himself intended. Firstly, his work is meant to be understood and used. It is meant to be a pedagogical tool. Liu Zhi intended it to be a standard textbook on Islamic proprieties and used in various Islamic education networks. He formerly had written a very comprehensive version of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* but it was too difficult for general readership. It was at the request of his readers that Liu Zhi wrote the extant *Selected Explanation of the Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (abbreviated as *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*). Not only does this present work contain the main discussion, it also has commentary, expanded annotation, a collected overview and even question and answer. It is designed to be a textbook suitable for most Muslims at different levels of learning.

Liu Zhi classified his readers into three categories and they should be helped by his extra commentaries and annotations. The first category was learners who were able to understand the work but found the meaning incomplete. Liu Zhi's extra commentary served to enhance understanding. The second category was learners who were able to understand but not able to grasp fluently the meaning of the work. Commentary and annotation should make their understanding more thorough and effective. The third category was the beginners who might know the meaning and reason but they still had doubts. Liu Zhi admitted using Confucian ideas primarily to help the last category of readers. His purpose for the section of questions and answers was to dispel confusion and misunderstanding for those who had distorted views on the original meaning of the text. Thus, one can say that this work is

⁵²⁵ The full text is translated into English in Appendice III.

clearly intended primarily for a pedagogical purpose for all types of learners and secondarily an apologetic purpose.

Secondly, the real importance of this work is to teach the profound meaning of Islamic rites and proprieties. It aims to enable the reader's inseparable union with the heavenly principle. Return to the Real Ruler is the ultimate aim of Islamic rites. Islamic rites are not meant to be legalistic.

Thirdly, Liu Zhi asserted that while one seemed to find Islamic truth difficult to understand, in fact Islamic truth was quite obvious. One should learn and understand Islamic books in a similar way to how one learned and understood Confucian books. Also, one who obeyed the rites of Islam was also similar to one who kept the rites as demanded by the holy Chinese ancient emperors. The point in this personal narrative really is that in the process of learning and understanding Islamic rites, beginners should not be frightened off.⁵²⁶ Rather, they should be comforted and take the same learning attitude to both Chinese and Islamic literatures. Liu Zhi used Confucian ideas especially for the beginners to help them understand and they were tools of communication.

Finally, Liu Zhi highlighted the teaching of ancient sages and compared them with ancient worthies. He also highlighted the similarity between the holy sages of the East and the sages in the Arabia. While the sage from Arabia is not explicitly named, clearly it is the prophet Muhammad. Also, he is mentioned explicitly with regard to the teaching of propriety in the personal narrative. For Muhammad, propriety can establish humankind. For ancient worthies, humankind without propriety loses its humanness.

From the perspective of contextualization, this personal narrative by Liu Zhi confirms the discussion in the last chapter of this present study. Firstly, if one compares the personal narrative in his first work of trilogy, namely *The Nature and Principle in Islam* with his personal narrative in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, one may note the overwhelming

⁵²⁶ This point is explained in the fourth chapter of Liu Zhi's work.

concern of Liu Zhi that the prime goal of his works is for the readers to understand. In the earlier first work, Liu Zhi ‘established explanations to transmit the meaning of the diagrams.’⁵²⁷ His method in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is no longer diagrams but commentaries, annotations and other easier to read examples from daily living. He repeatedly emphasized that the beginners and the doubters may understand his trilogy. He made his works easy to understand by the use of diagrams in his first part of trilogy. He used commentaries and annotations in the second work and lastly in *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, narrative with historical evidences from various sources to validate his records.

Liu Zhi in this personal narrative highlighted the reason for his use of Confucian terms. Primarily, he used Neo-Confucian terms for clearer explanation and to solve any doubt that one may have.⁵²⁸ He then continued in his narrative to state his view of the similarities between Islam and Neo-Confucianism.

In order to discuss the truth of Islam, we make our work easier to understand as it is no different to Neo-Confucian works. To learn and obey the Islamic propriety is likewise to learn and obey the teachings of the ancient sages and kings. The religion of holy sages, either in the East or the Arab world, either in ancient or modern times, is the same. However, people nowadays do not study and research this fact and gradually it disappears.⁵²⁹

The above quotation of Liu Zhi has led some scholars to believe that he simply asserted that Islam identified completely with Neo-Confucianism. Then, these scholars concluded that his Islam was sinicized. Such misinterpretation is due to the lack of deeper examination of the overall works of Liu Zhi and taking the above quotation out of the context of the whole personal narrative. He explained his view in greater detail in the third chapter of his work later. The above quotation should be understood and interpreted in the context of the whole work.

⁵²⁷ Murata, *Sage*, 95.

⁵²⁸ In Chinese, ‘乃質諸儒語, 以釋其疑’.

⁵²⁹ Appendice III.ii.

6.1.2 First Chapter: Original Teaching

This chapter is the introductory and foundational chapter in understanding Liu Zhi's teaching of Islamic rules and proprieties. This particular chapter has been well known partly because it was adopted as compulsory reading in the Muslim education network soon after its publication.⁵³⁰ It gives an overview of Liu Zhi's understanding of Islamic rites. It also serves as a useful resource to work out any unclear or ambiguous argument later in this or other of Liu Zhi's works.

Any first-time or even experienced reader of this chapter can easily detect Liu Zhi's emphasis on the superiority of Islam, very much like the first two chapters in *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*. Thus, one should be careful not to make the premature and unwarranted statement that Liu Zhi sinicized Islam into Neo-Confucianism. A careful reading of Liu Zhi's foundational first chapter may gain a better understanding of Liu Zhi's contextualization. Liu Zhi admitted that Islamic rites based on Islamic doctrine were not much different from Confucian ethics. However, Islam as a religion and a way to the knowledge of the divine being was superior to any Chinese thought systems including Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

Islam is superior because it is ancient, beginning from the creation of the world and humankind. It is superior not only because of its historicity and rapid global expansion, Islam has continued throughout all ages without any interruption. Several observations can be made. Firstly, the prophet Muhammad is significant at the beginning and end of this chapter. When Muhammad appeared, the Islamic way became clear and definitive. He revised all previous sacred texts into a final canon and formulated regulations. At the end of the chapter, the prophet Muhammad is implicitly mentioned and his role is also important for all Muslims. The role of the holy sages, including the seal of the prophets i.e. Muhammad, is to establish the religion of Islam so that humankind is not led astray. The

⁵³⁰ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 17-18.

way of these holy sages is the way of heaven. ‘The Sage is the personal agent of God’s will.’⁵³¹

Secondly, the chapter continues to delineate the superior qualities of Islam from the historical perspective. The origin is geographically located in the central part of the world. The tradition has been continuous without interruption of sages and worthies. Liu Zhi also described the history of Islam, its continuation and spread to various parts of the world throughout human history. While Muslims are scattered worldwide, they regularly come together in their localities and practise the same, unchanging rites. At the end of the chapter in his extended annotation, Liu Zhi gave an account using some Chinese historical records and asserted that Islam was more ancient than the Three Teachings of China. This expanded annotation is the longest section in this chapter. He attempted to demonstrate beyond all doubt that even the emperor Sui Mende (541-604)⁵³² admired the prophet Muhammad, sent an ambassador to the Middle East and sought from him sacred texts. The above story is also repeated in the last part of his trilogy, namely *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*. This chapter may be regarded as a prelude to the final part of Liu Zhi’s trilogy.

Thirdly, he creatively separated but did not divide the way of heaven and humankind. This chapter explains that both are aspects of Islamic rules and proprieties necessary for self-cultivation and return to the Real. The holy sages of Islam have set themselves up as examples of the way of heaven. Self-cultivation is the way of humankind, similar to the Confucian concept of realization. The usual Islamic concept of Five Pillars is the way of heaven. Both the way of heaven and humankind are integral in the process of ascending the path by continuously knowing the self, the Real and eventual return to the Real. It should be noted that Jin identifies Liu Zhi’s understanding of the proprieties of Islam that his concept is based on a *shari‘a*-minded Sufism.⁵³³

⁵³¹ Frankel, *Liu Zhi’s Journey*, 210.

⁵³² 隋文帝 during the Sui dynasty (581 – 618). The accuracy of Liu Zi’s dates between Islamic events and Chinese emperors has been doubtful. Appendice II.vii.

⁵³³ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 261.

Fourthly, Liu Zhi cautioned that in applying the principle of Islamic rites in real contexts, Muslims must exercise the rites with care. Such caution opens a window to understand his contextualization. The following section summarizes his view.

Theme: In all these regulations of activity and solitude, there is a principle that is unchanging and yet objectively adaptive, creatively in enforcing the rule of law.

Explanation: Whatever can be seen, heard, spoken, intuited, or situations like eating and resting at home, large and small occasion, there is a historical law to regulate human behaviour. So, Muslims are not to offend others and contravene propriety. At the same time, the law is objective and flexible enough to adapt appropriately, paying attention to the time and the context at that moment. This is to avoid holding firm to arid tradition with rigidity and stubbornly making no progress. In that way, the rule of the law continues to be complied with and yet it is exercised in a flexible manner without unfairness and with due respect to time and context. The rule of law remains the norm.⁵³⁴

Thus, the principle of Islamic proprieties remains unchanged but the application of the principle should be accommodating and flexible. How to apply the principle? One must not be offending to one's local context at that time. Simply put, the revealed truth is eternally unchanging but the tradition within a specific context should be adaptive. A tradition that is adaptive in a local context is a living one. A rigid and stubborn tradition is soon obsolete. The tradition is always in the process of forming and re-forming responding to the ever-changing contexts. When one reads the above quotation, one should bear in mind that the Hui Muslims are an ethnic minority in China. Not surprisingly, Liu Zhi's caution makes real sense in that in exercising the rites of Islam, Muslims should not offend and be fair to the majority Han people in China. He strived at a harmonious relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims. As Benite puts it, the Muslim literati sought to establish a dual identity of the Hui: both Chinese and Muslims. For Liu Zhi, the tradition of Islam makes progress and remains lively when the principle of the rites of Islam is applied with due respect to the cultural contexts.

⁵³⁴ Appendice IV. viii.

Finally, an important point is made by Liu Zhi's contextualization of the Sufi path in Chinese terms. This introductory chapter gives a very clear goal of Islamic rules and proprieties. Liu Zhi used a Buddhist term, namely 'vehicle', which is commonly used by Buddhists in their search for enlightenment. The aim of Islamic rites is to know the Ruler and the goal is to return to the Real. Rules and proprieties are to serve humankind to achieve that goal. The path of return is through the way of heaven, namely the five endeavours or five pillars of Islam and the way of humankind, namely the five relationships. Again, it emphasizes the role of the Utmost Sage, namely the prophet Muhammad. 'The Law is the non-human mechanism whereby this communication [human-divine] is achieved. As the living expression of the moral standard of the Way, it may even be said that the Sage is the embodiment of the Law.'⁵³⁵

The law of proprieties is represented by the concept of three vehicles. These vehicles are carriers and are described in an ascending order. They correspond to the Sufi concept of law, mystical path and truth.⁵³⁶ Liu Zhi explained the Sufi path in Confucian terms as follows:

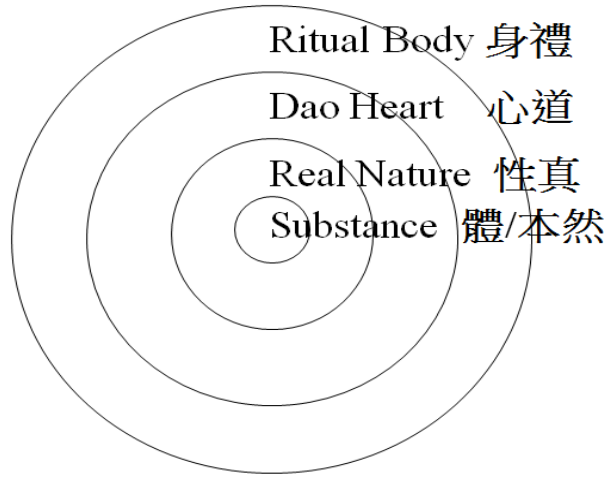
Working hard for your virtues and honouring endeavours are for body realization. Understanding thoroughly the principle and knowing thoroughly the nature can enlighten the heart. With self-control and accomplishing the real, you can see nature. Without endeavour and cultivation, your heart is not illuminated. Such a heart cannot see nature. Without seeing nature, you cannot unite with heaven. Nature is not seen because the selfish 'I' has hidden it. Therefore, the rule of the three vehicles deals with the polishing up of the selfish 'I'. Above the rule of the three vehicles, a transcendent rule of vehicles exists. In it, both heaven and humans are transformed; with no name or trace left. There is no word to describe the experience except that you have to experience it.⁵³⁷

The following diagram by Liu Zhi may help to explain the practical aspect of the concept of three vehicles.

⁵³⁵ Frankel, *Liu Zhi's Journey*, 210.

⁵³⁶ Frankel, *Liu Zhi's Journey*, 178-84.

⁵³⁷ This argument in the introductory chapter is further explained in the fourth and fifth chapter of *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.



On the left, the diagram is called ‘the True Practice of Sage Endeavour’.⁵³⁸ Liu Zhi expounded the relationship between the body, heart and nature which correspond to the propriety, way and real respectively. The function of the three vehicles is to remove all kinds of self-centredness as the seeker makes progress in his path.

At the centre is the root suchness. Liu Zhi used root suchness to describe the Real Being and the goal of the endeavour of the sage is the return to the Real. Murata explains the Islamic concept and the endeavour.

Propriety (the *Shariah*) brings one’s body and activities into harmony with the Self-so, the Way (the *Tariqah*) turns one’s heart and consciousness away from the lower tendencies of the ego, and the Real (the *Haqiqah*) is the realization of the nature of continuity (the Muhammadan Spirit), which then spontaneously manifests itself in the body’s observation of propriety and the heart’s following the Way. At this stage, the individual endeavour has been reintegrated into the Self-so,⁵³⁹ and the engendering and prescriptive commands coincide.⁵⁴⁰

Thus, Liu Zhi’s contextualization is to identify the Sufi path of law, path and truth as cultivated body, illuminated heart and unveiled nature respectively. While the law is able to cultivate the body or establish humanity, such mere outward compliance with the law is not sufficient. Islamic law and rites should not be regarded legalistically. Liu Zhi’s contextualization emphasizes the transformation of the heart or the *dao* in the heart. Simply put, orthodoxy or mere right understanding is not sufficient for the complete Sufi path. The

⁵³⁸ The diagram is no. 4.6 of *Nature and Principle in Islam* and titled ‘Diagram of the True Practice of Sage Endeavour. Murata, *Sage*, 448-449.

⁵³⁹ Self-so literally means nature (*ziran* 自然). Murata translates Liu Zhi’s *ziran* either into Self-so or Self-suchness. Murata says that it is a Daoist term. Murata, *Sage*, 200, 444.

⁵⁴⁰ Murata, *Sage*, 452.

rite is the first vehicle and necessary beginning for any Sufi path and contributes towards the polishing up of the selfish 'I'. This process is known as the illumination of the heart. Orthopraxis begins with hard work, honouring endeavours and continues polishing up the selfish 'I'. It is right doing with emphasis on the inner transformation of the heart in addition to obedience to the rites of Islam. The second and third vehicle serves to enlighten the heart. Then, the enlightened heart can see the nature of the Sufi path. Such seeing is related to understanding the principle and knowing the nature of humanity.

Vehicle, body, heart, nature, principle, cultivation, enlightenment and others are common Chinese terms in Liu Zhi's contextualization.⁵⁴¹ Liu Zhi used them skillfully to explain all the characteristics of a Sufi path with his own emphasis on the role of heart. The transformation must involve the heart without any negligence of outward compliance of the law. The goal of heart transformation is enlightenment and seeing. Alternatively put, this is unveiling in the context of Sufism.

6.1.3 Second Chapter: The Real Ruler

This is a recapitulation of Liu Zhi's first work, *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. In this chapter, Liu Zhi developed his understanding of the Real Ruler with respect to rules and proprieties of Islam. This chapter does not explicate the disclosure of the Real as in detailed a manner as his earlier work but the Confucian and commonly used concepts of substance, function and act are concisely explained. Liu Zhi made a few emphases in this chapter but only two emphases are discussed because they are more relevant to the concept of unity of existence which is one of the objectives in this present study.

Firstly, he carefully highlighted the fact that the Real Ruler is both one and unique, notably at the beginning of the chapter and at the end when he unusually expounded the meaning of Qur'an Sura 112. 'One and unique' means the Real Ruler is both a transcendent and

⁵⁴¹ This is an important point. Liu Zhi explained in greater detail in the fourth and early fifth chapter of *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

immanent being. His transcendence is characterized by the pre-existent root suchness. His immanence is characterized by inclusivity and nothing is outside his manifestation. When he expounded Sura 112, he confirmed that there was only one Real Ruler. In addition, Liu Zhi offered two possible reasons for such affirmation in Sura 112. The first one was to refute other religions, possibly Christianity. Liu Zhi believed that in the Christian gospel, the father God begot a son. The second was to encourage the seeker to seek the way single-mindedly so that his body and heart could merge. Thus, the concept of oneness applies to the Real Ruler and also the seekers' union of the heart and body.

Secondly, Liu Zhi's understanding of the Real Ruler emphasizes integration. The Real is both transcendent and immanent. Transcendence is not in opposition to immanence. Rather, the two aspects complement each other. Taking them together, it gives a complete understanding of the Real Ruler. The substance and function of the Real Ruler should be distinguished and yet not separated. While the substance is distinguished from function in terms of being hidden and manifested, they belong to the same category.

Liu Zhi used two examples to illustrate his argument. Numerical numbers like one and ten are different numbers but they are related and belong to the category of number. Ice and coolness or fire and hotness have no chronological priority. Again, the concept of movement and stillness in the Real Ruler should be intertwined and integrated. The Real unceasingly moves and is eternally quiet. 'There is stillness in movement, movement in stillness.' Liu Zhi used the examples of human breathing and the changing seasons to prove his point. Both movement and stillness belong to the on-going cyclical event. Clearly, Liu Zhi's use of practical example is to help beginners to understand the relation between transcendence and immanence.

With regard to his strategy of contextualization, this chapter is easy to read and understand compared to his earlier work, namely *The Nature and Principle in Islam*. The intricacy of transcendence and immanence of the Real Ruler is clearly explained without the use of a complicated theosophical system. Emphatically, he denies the Christian doctrine that the divine father begot an incarnated son. He defends his understanding of the transcendence

and immanence of the Real Ruler and upholds resolutely the oneness and uniqueness of the Real. His goal of contextualization is to help his beginner readers to understand and not to be misled. As for Muslims who have doubted they should cast away any doubt and overcome any heretical deviations.

6.1.4 Third Chapter: Epistemology

Liu Zhi began to explain epistemologically the connection between the ritual practice of a seeker's body, heart and nature with the Real Ruler who is both transcendent in its root suchness and immanent in its action in the acquired heaven. Here, our study will focus on the connection between the knowledge of the Real Ruler and the ritual practices of the seekers and Liu Zhi's contextualization of both knowledge and practice.

Firstly, the existence of a creator who is the Real Ruler is proved by the commonly known cosmological argument in monotheism. The existence of a creator God is the most appropriate explanation after observing not only the existence of the cosmos but also its design. However, the knowledge of this Real Ruler requires more than observations or speculations. Mere outward traits in this creation may not convince people of the existence and attributes of Real Ruler. The seekers must exhaust the principle and ascertain the nature of all the traits or observable things. Heterodoxies arise because people misinterpret a human being who is a creature as the Real Ruler or an abstract principle as a divine being. Liu Zhi also encouraged his readers to observe one particular aspect of creation, namely the human soul.⁵⁴² Thus, observation should be done on both visible and invisible traits in

⁵⁴² Liu Zhi distinguished between the soul and heart in this chapter. 'The heart and way cohere, the soul and subtlety unite.' While the heart is related to the way, the soul is related to the subtlety. Murata helpfully explains the Islamic thought behind these two terms. The heart means the mind or the heart-and-mind. Liu Zhi's use of heart never refers to the physical heart. Rather, the heart is the locus of human awareness and consciousness. It embraces physical, psychical and spiritual dimensions. These dimensions are closely related to the Sufi path. The soul (literally as breath) has ambiguous meaning and usually means self. Murata asserts that the soul 'is the locus of our individual awareness, our selfhood. Each of us represents a unique combination of spirit and body, light and darkness, intelligence and ignorance, remembrance and forgetfulness.' Murata, *Sage*, 56. It is with such an understanding of the soul that Liu Zhi related the soul with the subtlety. Rather than the heart, the soul is a clear creation trait by which humanity can ascertain the existence of the creator.

creation. Knowledge of the Real Ruler is acquired through both the visible and invisible traits.

Secondly, it is vitally important to know the Real Ruler and return to him by the ritual practice initiated from the seeker's heart.⁵⁴³ As noted before, Liu Zhi consistently emphasized the role of human heart. The Real Ruler belongs to the realm of invisibility and boundlessness. How can seekers who belong to the realm of visibility and finiteness make connection with the Real Ruler through ritual rules and proprieties? The key to answering the question is Liu Zhi's integrative understanding of the Real Ruler who is both transcendent and immanent. Likewise, the humankind has both visible body and other invisible components like nature and souls. Liu Zhi explained clearly that while the Real Ruler's root suchness and substance were hidden, Ruler's actions were manifested in the innate and the acquired heaven.

This chapter explains that seekers can see the Real's traits in the world of image present in the acquired heaven.⁵⁴⁴ Mere compliance with the Islamic rite is not effective in interpreting the trait and experiencing the presence of the Real Ruler. The importance of the seeker's soul which is an invisible part of humankind is emphasized.⁵⁴⁵ Proprieties enable the seekers' body and heart to engage properly with the traits in the world.⁵⁴⁶ A clever and astute seeker is a trained spiritual person. He ponders the principle and vital energy of the Real Ruler and can see the Ruler in anything. Liu Zhi supported this argument by quoting Qur'an Sura 41:53 and a *hadith* which says, 'understanding oneself is to understand the Lord.' One should not misinterpret Liu Zhi's commentary of the sacred text. While Liu Zhi maintained the unbridgeable gulf between the human and divine, he also averred epistemologically that humankind had the innate capacity for a general knowledge of the

⁵⁴³ '惟知真主而趨向之，則根腳正定；紛紛異端，不得以邪說惑亂矣' When Liu Zhi discussed the Sufi path, the heart or mind played a very important role.

⁵⁴⁴ '真宰之本然，隱於用而見於為也。真主之為，有見於先天者，萬物之理是也，有見於後天者，萬物之象是也。'

⁵⁴⁵ '身內之物，如靈性，無形色，亦無方位者也。日與吾俱，吾不得見其本然為何如也。'

⁵⁴⁶ '由著之隱，由顯之微，以漸而心神契合，則難測者易測矣，難知者易知矣。'

existence of the Real Ruler. A specific knowledge of the Real Ruler must be carried out by unveiling through rules and proprieties with the inner transformation of the heart.

Finally, in the last section of the chapter, Liu Zhi briefly explained his adoption ‘the Real Lord’ as the most common divine name of Islam. Lordship implies ownership and above all sovereignty. ‘Real’ means it is the creator. The ‘Real’ has full control from beginning to eternity and the power to order all things.⁵⁴⁷ Thus, Liu Zhi used the Real Lord/Ruler to denote a sovereign, invisible without any image, an all encompassing and pre-determining divine being. He reminded seekers that they should give up any desire to seek a visible image of the deity because it was false and not real. It should be clear in this chapter that while humankind resembles the Real Ruler, there is a significant ontological difference between them. Liu Zhi emphasized that the return to the Real should primarily focus on the practice of the heart although the practice of the body should not be ignored.

From the perspective of contextualization, the most important point is Liu Zhi’s comparison between the Real Ruler of Islam and the divine being recorded in the *Analects* in the final paragraph of this chapter.

My humble view: God as interpreted in the *Analects* as the heavenly Lord is similar to Islam that calls God by the name of the Lord Ruler. Look at the ancient historical records about the five Emperors and three Kings. They had piety towards God and were sincere. The historical books record that God is called the heavenly Lord, other examples like, royal heaven, vast heaven, heavenly will, and heavenly wrath and so on. Here, we talk about heaven. It means God and does not mean the massive and visible sky...

The older generation of Confucian followers say, ‘the evil of the heretics makes it impossible to explain the way.’ I consider that the damage of the heresies is to stop the explanation of the way. Those who study the ancient texts, they understand the way. It is due to the words of the ancient emperors and the holy worthies. In this way, the heresy can be eliminated. As a result, the way of Islam can be clear and exposed.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ ‘嘗又系以‘真’字，曰‘真主’。蓋因人之稱主者不一，或掌握一物，或操權一時，或蒙昧僭稱於一處，沒則已焉。非若大造之主，總理象而無遠遺，互終古而不易，是乃為真主也。’

⁵⁴⁸ Appendice IV.xlv-xlvi.

The above quotation gives the clearest answer that Liu Zhi found the Chinese contexts to be helpful conversation partners. He identified the Islamic Real Ruler with the deity taught in very ancient Chinese thought. This thought began around the period of Three Kings and Five Emperors. The estimated time of this period is around 2,852 – 2,070 BCE. There is little reliable written record. Liu Zhi believed that Confucius and his immediate followers also taught monotheistic faith but the later followers of Confucius corrupted it and turned the teaching into deviation. The successful earlier Jesuit missionaries in China adopted this argument and asserted that the ancient Kings and Emperors believed in monotheism similar to Christianity. Likewise, Liu Zhi possibly followed the strategy of the early Jesuits a century later. Thus, he intentionally adopted a specific strategy in his contextualization. The above quotation also confirms our interpretation of Liu Zhi's use of Confucianism in his personal narrative in the beginning of this work. Liu Zhi did not teach a sinicized Islam.

6.1.5 Fourth Chapter: Meaning and Witness

This chapter explains the meaning of endeavours. It focuses on the acquisition of the knowledge of the Real Ruler through nature and body with an emphasis on the role of the heart. Heart is emphasized in both this chapter and the next chapter. In order to explain endeavours in terms of the relationship between body, heart and nature, it is best to remember the earlier diagram of the 'True Practice of the Sage Endeavour'.

Endeavours involve both the body and nature with emphasis on the role of the heart.

What do both body and nature prove? Within the body, there are visible, invisible components and also the movement and stillness of the whole body. This is ultimately due to nature. Humankind cannot continue its bodily function without its nature. Also, you cannot see nature outside the body. It is because nature comes first and then the body can function. Nature manifests through the function of the body. This is enough to prove that within this heaven and earth and ten thousand things, visible things and invisible spirit have their origin, namely, the one and real Lord. It is absolutely not that beside the real Lord there is a gap that can hold heaven and earth and ten thousand things. Also, they are not inside the Lord's root suchness that contains all these things. The subtle unity between the real

Lord and all things is a mysterious principle similar to the union of heaven and humanity. It is not easy to explain. However, you may understand the mystery from both the body and nature. While it cannot be seen and heard, it can be completely heard and seen with body and nature. Originally, it is beyond our limits and without colour and form. Yet you can see the encompassing flowing of substance and function. These are clearly revealed.⁵⁴⁹

In this chapter, Liu Zhi explained that endeavours are not for mere self-cultivation. Muslims use their endeavours to testify the unity of existence between the Real and other existents. While the Real is eternally hidden, both body and nature could manifest the Real in their endeavours.

The relationship between the nature and the heart is explained in the same chapter as follows:

Nature is invisible and it fully fills the person. Through the heart, the self can understand his nature and also the eyes can see. The thinking can perceive and see his nature but the ears cannot do so. Nevertheless, you have not had any difficulty in working out the form of nature, resulting in a nature that is uncertain and wavering.⁵⁵⁰

Two more quotations on the role of the heart in human endeavours appear in the next chapter, namely the fifth chapter:

Why are there five endeavours? It is because the heart and nature of humanity are interconnected, similar to a lock and key. Ears, eyes, mouth, nose and body are affected by sound, colour, taste, smell and movement, respectively. These [physical images/ perception] may cause love and hatred toward fleshly feelings. Such feelings are like the spring of a lock, which triggers the lock, making perfect and faultless the union between the heart and nature. If you use the key to open the lock, the spring of the lock is released and thus the union is separated. The five senses of feelings, namely sound, colour, taste, smell and movement are a burden and constrain humanity. Thus, five different methods are needed and

⁵⁴⁹ Appendice IV.xlviii

⁵⁵⁰ Appendice IV.xlvii.

they gradually can remove the burden. Human nature can be then manifested and the way [of cultivation] is clear. Thus, the five endeavours are necessary for cultivation.⁵⁵¹

While humans may desire cultivating the way, they may not know the method and end in failure. Witnessing the Lord directs the heart to return and does not let the heart linger on aimlessly. Know that the real Lord is the origin of the great transformation and all mandates are derived from him. Anyone who desires to return to the mandate must then follow the real Lord as the reliable guide, achieving the return by constraining the body and heart. If humans give witness to other things, they fail both this life and the afterlife and are beyond any cure. How can it be possible for such humans to hope for any success?⁵⁵²

With reference to the diagram of the ‘True Practice of the Sage Endeavour’ comprising four concentric circles, the entry outer circle of endeavour is the ritual body. Rites are carried out by the physical body. However, humanity is composed of both the visible body and invisible nature. Nature is interpreted as the control which governs the action and senses of the body. Thus, nature is inseparable from the body but needs to be distinguished from it. It is prior to the body and determines the body. Between the circle of ritual body and real nature, Liu Zhi put in the circle of *dao* heart. He averred that the real nature was interconnected with the *dao* heart. The relationship between nature and heart is similar to a lock and key. The *dao* heart could lock or open the real nature. When the real nature is locked, it can enter into the level of root suchness with the Real. Thus, the *dao* heart is located at a circle between the body ritual and the real nature. Simply put, the body that practises the rites is controlled by the real nature. However, the body can affect the *dao* heart and vice versa. The body experiences various external factors and this experience may affect the *dao* heart. Thus, the diagram of the True Practice of the Sage Endeavour is explained.

The ritual body, *dao* heart and real nature are interconnected and inseparable although they are drawn in the diagram as concentric circles. It is the real nature that can unite with the Real but the role of ritual body cannot be ignored at all. The goal of Islamic rites is union

⁵⁵¹ Appendice IV.lv.

⁵⁵² Appendice IV.lv-lvi.

with the Real. The role of the heart is that firstly it can affect the body by constant repetition of asserting the unity of God (*Shahadah*) and secondly, the self can then see the invisible nature and understand the mysterious unity of God. This explains Liu Zhi's constant emphasis on the role of the heart. It should be noted that a branch or school of Neo-Confucianism also emphasizes the heart. It is called the School of Mind.

A brief explanation of the School of Mind is now provided. This is needed because it explains the repeated emphases on the role of the heart in all Liu Zhi's works. Zhu Xi (1130 – 1200) is the leading thinker of the School of Principle and Wang Yangming (1472 – 1529) is the most important thinker of the School of Mind. At the time of Liu Zhi, the School of Mind is in decline but the School of Principle is gaining imperial recognition and support. Wang Yangming's most important concept of the mind (literal: heart) is related to Liu Zhi's concept of the heart. Wang's fundamental teaching is his interpretation of the Great Learning.⁵⁵³

Wang understood the Great Learning as the learning of the great man. He wrote, 'The great man is an all-pervading unity, which is one with Heaven, Earth and all things.'⁵⁵⁴ The great man is able to unite with all things 'because the human-heartedness is naturally so.'⁵⁵⁵ The heart has natural instincts and knows that right is right and wrong is wrong. This is intuitive knowledge which is defined by Wang as 'the nature which Heaven has conferred on us, the original state of our mind, which is spontaneously intelligent and keenly conscious. Any ideas which arise are without fail automatically comprehended by this 'intuitive knowledge' of our mind. If they be good, the intuitive knowledge in our mind automatically comprehends this.'⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵³ Wang's major writing is *Questions on the Great Learning*. See, Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 598-603.

⁵⁵⁴ Wang Yangming, as cited by Fung, *Short History*, 508.

⁵⁵⁵ Fung, *Short History*, 510.

⁵⁵⁶ Wang Yangming, as cited by Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 602.

Wang's intuitive knowledge means that the heart in its original state is not obscured by selfishness.⁵⁵⁷ This intuitive knowledge is always followed by a corresponding action. A selfish person would not follow the virtuous instinct of his heart because the heart is obscured. However, the 'learning of the great man serves simply to clear away the obscuring and thus to manifest the illustrious virtue, so as thus to restore the original unity of Heaven, Earth and all things.'⁵⁵⁸ However, there is one major drawback in Wang's concept of intuitive knowledge. Although a pure heart knows right and wrong, it does not give a clear teaching of the practical 'know-how'.

The fourth chapter of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* deals with the explanation, meanings and witness of the endeavours. In the beginning, Liu Zhi emphasized the need for exhaustive effort to understand the principle of endeavours and make all investigations of all aspects of endeavours. 'Meaning is to know exhaustibly the principle and examine all things. Witness⁵⁵⁹ is to explore the mystery and explain the meaning.' He clearly adopted the School of Principle and Zhu Xi's concept of investigation of things and the extension of knowledge. The first sentence of this chapter is to emphasize orthodoxy, namely right understanding of Islamic rites, in terms of the School of Principle of Neo-Confucianism. For Liu Zhi, knowing the meaning of endeavours requires an on-going process of hard work. The knowledge needs to be continually expanded.

In the middle part of the chapter and the beginning of the next chapter, the role of heart is then emphasized. 'Through the heart, the self can understand his nature and also the eyes can see.' The heart and nature are interconnected. Liu Zhi most likely adopted Wang Yangming's concept of the mind and explained that the heart must be pure and virtuous, free from any selfishness. While the School of Principle is seemingly in antithesis to the School of Mind in the interpretation of the world,⁵⁶⁰ the order of things and others, Liu Zhi employed both schools of Neo-Confucianism in his explanation of the endeavours. Thus,

⁵⁵⁷ Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 604.

⁵⁵⁸ Fung, *Short History*, 510.

⁵⁵⁹ Alternative translation: Testification.

⁵⁶⁰ The School of Principle asserts that the nature is principle (性即是理) but the School of Mind asserts that the nature is mind or heart (心即是理). Fung, *Short History*, 504.

Liu Zhi's contextualization is to employ any aspect of Neo-Confucianism as long as he could explain the meaning of Islamic rites and also the need for the purity of heart. The School of Mind provides the insight for Liu Zhi to emphasize that the heart must not be obscured by selfish desires. With a pure and sincere heart, the Islamic rites are necessarily virtuous. Simply put, endeavours with right understanding and right doing involve both the body and heart.

In addition, the final goal of both right understanding and doing is unveiling. The prophet Muhammad provides not only the perfect example of endeavours but also assists Muslims' unveiling and their return to the Real. The context of this chapter makes it clear that while the sage in this chapter is not explicitly called the Utmost Sage, the holy sage can be interpreted as the prophet Muhammad.

Imitate that which is visible and follow the way of the sage. Then, you can reach the realm that is conceived to be impossible to reach. The holy sage is indeed human but he is the representative of the way and also manifests the way. The real Lord is the origin of the holy way. Therefore, testifying to the sage is to testify to the Lord. If you testify thoroughly to the end, you also testify to the deeper mystery of the Lord. You can speak of two testimonies, one to the Lord and the other to the sage. In reality, it belongs to the same principle.⁵⁶¹

Based on such analysis above, it may be concluded that Liu Zhi's contextualization is uniquely his own in that he selectively made choices from all aspects of Chinese contexts, both the School of Principle and Mind of Neo-Confucianism. He selected, edited and modified his Chinese contexts as necessary to communicate the meaning and witness of Islamic rites.

⁵⁶¹ Appendice IV.xlix.

6.1.6 Fifth Chapter: Five Endeavours

This is one of the longest chapters in this work and it gives a clear and essential summary of the nature and meaning of the five pillars of Islam which are contextualized as the five endeavours. The Confucian basic meaning of endeavours has the connotation of merit. The word endeavour is a good translation because while the true practice is truly the hard work carried out by the seekers, it is fundamentally empowered by the Utmost Sage and preordered by the Real Ruler. Liu Zhi, the integrative thinker, consistently insisted that both aspects, divine and human, were necessary for humankind to return to the Real Ruler. The previous chapter emphasizes the spiritual or metaphysical meaning of true practice and the unique role of the prophet Muhammad. This chapter follows on from the previous chapter and discusses the complementary aspect of the true practice, namely the practical details for daily living of all Muslims. Liu Zhi emphasized the five endeavours because they were revealed in the sacred Qur'an as divine commands and exemplified by the prophet Muhammad.⁵⁶² After an overview in chapter five, Liu Zhi used three subsequent chapters to expound the five endeavours in greater detail.

Any reader who examines this chapter generally can get a good overview of the five endeavours. Firstly, one can clearly know that the aim of the five endeavours is more than mere self-cultivation of human character. It is to do ultimately with one's return to the Real or the unity of the human with heaven. The five endeavours are the means to the end. Secondly, one can notice that the major concern of Liu Zhi's discussion is on the first endeavour which is to bear witness, *Shahadah*. While he explained that there were ten extensive rules that governed the true practice of *Shahadah*, the other four endeavours were not given such detailed discussion. At the end of the chapter, he repeatedly emphasized the vital role of *Shahadah*. It is the foundation of the beginning of all things and the backbone of the five endeavours.⁵⁶³ The ten rules governed not only the external practice of audible and verbal recitation but also the internal practice of inaudible heart recitation. Not only

⁵⁶² The opening prologue emphasizes that the five endeavours are divine commands. '五者皆主命，而聖人作則，以示眾人者也。'

⁵⁶³ 髓，言其精旨，元，言其根始也。百功資成念，猶百體資成於精髓也。

Muslims should understand the meaning of their witness, they should readily without hesitation answer any queries about *Shahadah*.

A more detailed examination of this chapter can reveal Liu Zhi's systematic method in presenting the importance of five endeavours and his integration of outward and inward compliance of law by the true practice of the heart. Thus, the five endeavours are not interpreted legalistically. Also, there is a rational basis and yet the role of the heart is always emphasized. Liu Zhi further explained different aspects of the endeavours.

Firstly, Liu Zhi gave a rational account for the important roles of the five endeavours. While the five endeavours were external rites, they also resembled the five senses of humanity. He argued that physical senses were linked to the inner sentiments of the heart. For Liu Zhi, inner sentiments and feelings were burdens on the seekers, withholding and constraining the seeker's progress. He used the example of a lock. This example is important and requires brief recapitulation. Sentiments are like the spring of a lock and enable the lock to be open position. The five endeavours are like the key to the lock. If the key is turned, the lock is closed, resulting in an ideal situation of union. The ideal role of the five endeavours is not to allow any inner sentiment to affect the locked position. After birth, human nature gradually becomes insensitive and falsehood grows daily. The five endeavours are to remove such hindrances to the seekers' path. While Liu Zhi occasionally used the Qur'anic source to assert the divine decree, he often resorted to rational argument and thus made his argument more convincing. Unlike *The Nature and Principle in Islam* which uses one diagram to discuss a theme, this chapter provides plentiful illustrations to make his arguments convincing and easier to understand. Obedience to the five endeavours is compared with the discovery of treasure. The seekers continue their endeavours because they are afraid of losing the treasure. The real Lord is the creator, controller and manager of the cosmos. Liu Zhi illustrated this by saying that a knife must have a knife-maker; a racing chariot a rider in control and a garden a gardener to manage the garden. Thus, the importance of the five endeavours is argued rationally.

Secondly, the integration of the outward compliance of the five endeavours with the inward compliance by the true practice of the heart is emphasized. It is not the body but the heart that has contact with the way of heaven. ‘The way of heaven works harmoniously with the human heart’.⁵⁶⁴ When the five endeavours are accomplished, the seekers are at the end of the acquired heaven⁵⁶⁵ because their hearts are in the appropriate condition to perceive the substance and function in the innate heaven. That is, the seekers have accomplished the true practice of the bodily substance.⁵⁶⁶ They may continue their paths or ways with their heart body and nature body. To a certain extent, the external compliance with the five endeavours concerns the true practice of the bodily substance but the internal compliance is equally important.

Another aspect of Liu Zhi’s integration deals with the five endeavours. The first endeavour is witness (*Shahadah*). The witness is to direct the seeker towards the real Lord and the prophet Muhammad who was sent by God.⁵⁶⁷ This is the seeker’s ultimate goal. The seeker should look at nothing in this world but out of this world for the real Lord because he is invisible. The second endeavour is ritual prayer which is the path of return. Seekers practice prayer and they are then on the path of return. It is because the seeker is aware of the final goal and he sets himself on the path towards that final goal. The third and fourth endeavours deal with self-centredness. The third endeavour of fasting is to resist the temptation of material things and the seeker takes control of his desire. The fourth endeavour of alms-tax is even harder. It is to sacrifice the human self. It is not so much for one to let go of one’s desire. More than that, one is dead to material things. The fifth pilgrimage means to return to the real Lord, forgoing the love of home and looking forward to a glorious union with the real Lord. The issue is not the temporary giving up of the visible home or to seek for a holy location. Rather, it is the fervent desire for the unity with

⁵⁶⁴天道人心，妙合而通也。

⁵⁶⁵修此。而後天道盡。

⁵⁶⁶ Literally, bodily substance means the physical body (身體, *shen ti*). Murata says that ‘Liu commonly used *ti* [體] for body, but he tended to use *shen* [身] as a contrast for the heart.’ Murata, *Sage*, 438. It should be noted that Liu Zhi asserted that humans have three substances, namely bodily substance, heart substance and nature substance. Murata, *Sage*, 519.

⁵⁶⁷念。知所歸也。

the real Lord. Thus, the integration of the five endeavours is the union of humankind with the real Lord, contextualized as self-cultivation of body, heart and nature. Unsurprisingly, when discussing the first endeavour of bearing witness, Liu Zhi emphasized audible, inaudible, verbal and even nonverbal form of bearing witness from the heart. When discussing prayer, he emphasized set time, ritual and non-set time, and non-ritual prayers.

Finally, the seekers should pay careful attention to the prophet Muhammad who is their example in accomplishing the five endeavours. Liu Zhi laid down ten rules for the important first endeavour, *Shahadah*. In addition, he discussed the role of the Utmost Sage, the prophet Muhammad. The importance of Muhammad is due to both his nature and body. The significance of his nature or more correctly ‘nature of continuity’ (繼性) is due to its intermediary function. Without his nature of continuity, seekers are not able to actualize their full realization. The significance of his body is due to his receiving of the divine revelation, resulting in the gift of the Qur’an. His sensory and revelatory faculties are superbly miraculous. They are far superior to all previous holy sages.⁵⁶⁸ He possesses all the virtues. That is, the prophet Muhammad embodies Islam. To know Islam is also to know the Utmost Sage. In Liu Zhi’s expanded annotation, he praised the glorious contributions of the prophet Muhammad.

Great is the Utmost Sage! His mandate is before heaven and earth and yet he was born at the end of all holy sages.⁵⁶⁹

Great is the Utmost Sage! His way is the tradition of thousands of sages. He faithfully and utterly obeys the Lord of the cosmos.⁵⁷⁰

Great is the Utmost Sage! His endeavours are as huge as the heaven and earth. His way includes both the laws of divine and human.⁵⁷¹

It is clear and obvious that without the prophet Muhammad, the usefulness of the five endeavours is limited. Liu Zhi’s clear and summarized narrative of the Utmost Sage in the

⁵⁶⁸經調：凡欲識至聖者，先須認其宗派，此至聖之宗派也。

⁵⁶⁹大哉聖人，命立天地之前，誕生萬聖之後...

⁵⁷⁰大哉聖人！道傳千聖之宗，忠竭萬方之主...

⁵⁷¹大哉聖人！功同天地之能，道冠天人之表...

final part of the fifth chapter on the teaching of five endeavours gives a very clear emphasis that the role of the Utmost Sage is vital for the Muslims to return to the Real. The Utmost Sage has primordial existence in the innate heaven. He is the Human Ultimate. He is also a human being who has superior revelation and sensory power. Without knowing the Utmost Sage, there is no return to the Real. Any reader can hardly miss that such description of the prophet Muhammad belongs to the Sufi tradition. Like Ibn ‘Arabi, Liu Zhi came perilously close to deifying the Human Ultimate.⁵⁷²

6.2 A Critical Assessment of Contemporary Scholarship on Liu Zhi’s *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*

Before undertaking an overview of contemporary scholarship on Liu Zhi’s *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, it is necessary to explain Liu Zhi’s understanding of the way of heaven and the way of humanity in the tenth chapter of this so-called very Confucianized work. In the fifth chapter, there is an overview of the five endeavours and a brief description of each endeavour. Then, the first endeavour is explained in greater detail. More details of the other four endeavours are explained between the sixth to eighth chapters. It is in these chapters that the five endeavours are clearly stated as the way to heaven.

From the tenth chapter, Liu Zhi discussed the way of humanity which describes five Islamic ethics of human relationships (hereafter: five relationships) which bear strong resemblance to five Confucian ethical codes. The five Islamic ethics of relationships are the relationship between king and courtier, father and son, husband and wife, brother and sister and lastly a friend and another friend. These ethical rules for harmonious human relationship are a common code, the norm of nature and unchanging propriety.⁵⁷³ However, they are more than mere harmonious human relationships. Liu Zhi imbued these relationships with Islamic content in his tenth chapter.

⁵⁷² J. Little asserts that Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept of the perfect man came close to deifying the prophet. See John T. Little, ‘Al-Insan al-Kamil: the Perfect Man,’ *Muslim World* 77 (1987) 54.

⁵⁷³ 五典者，乃君臣，父子，夫婦，昆弟，朋友之常經，為天理當然之則，一定不移之禮也。Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988) 114.

Islam establishes the five endeavours to achieve the way of heaven, also the five relationships to achieve the way of humanity. The way of heaven and humanity are not two ways but the external and internal aspect of just one way. To be on the way of humanity means eventually near to the way of heaven. The foundation of the way of heaven is the way of humanity. Being on the way of heaven is inclusive of the way of humanity. It is because the way of humanity is to put right the essential nature of humankind. At the end of both the way of heaven and humanity, humankind has accomplished things that ought to be done.⁵⁷⁴

Liu Zhi innovatively connected the five endeavours (i.e. five pillars of Islam) with the Confucian five ethical codes using both the concept of way of heaven and humanity. Thus, if one just reads the tenth to twentieth chapters without any reference to all the previous chapters, one easily concludes that Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* sinicized Islamic ethics into Confucianism. However, if one just reads from the first to the ninth chapters, one can easily conclude that Liu Zhi's Islamic five endeavours are superior religious proprieties and different from Confucianism. Also, if one focuses on the way of humanity and its parallel with the five Confucian codes, one will conclude Liu Zhi's work is totally sinicized. If one focuses on the way of heaven and its parallel with the five pillars of Islam, one will conclude that his work is very Islamic and yet contextualized. It should be noted that Liu Zhi himself refused to separate the two ways and interweave two aspects together. Thus, it is neither Confucianized nor a mere adaptation of the form of Confucianism. It is important to hold together the two aspects that Liu Zhi has integrated together. Thus, if one merely takes a section of Liu Zhi's work out of context, one can easily misinterpret Liu Zhi's works and his contextualization. This present work has persistently examined both the longer and shorter works and thus gives a more balanced view of Liu Zhi's Islam in Confucian terms.

The common consensus of Chinese scholars on Liu Zhi's work is that *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is most Confucianized. A few careful and articulate Chinese scholars

⁵⁷⁴ 聖教立五功以盡天道，又立五典以盡人道者，天道，人道，原相表裡而非二也。蓋盡人道而返乎天道，斯天道有以立其基，盡天道而存乎人道，斯人道有以正其本。天道，人道盡，而為人之能事畢矣。Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties* Tianjin: (Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988) 116.

who study this work more thoroughly will take a minority view different from the consensus. From the West, there is only one scholar, namely James D. Frankel who investigates in detail some parts of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. A critical assessment of scholarly opinions will be provided at the end of this chapter.

6.2.1 An Overview

With regard to Liu Zhi's Islamic works in general, some contemporary scholars argue that his *Han Kitab* is an articulate effort of Confucianization, Sinicization, indigenization and even acclimatization⁵⁷⁵ of Islam into Chinese culture in his times. Other scholars may assert that Liu Zhi's strategy is accommodation and adaptation. A few scholars may be more neutral in that Liu Zhi intended his works to be mutual cultural enrichment between Muslim and the Chinese. A typical slogan concerning Liu Zhi's works is that these works have tried to seek convergence with the Chinese culture and yet maintained the differences. The core issue is the degree and nature of such differences. Obviously, there is a spectrum of opinions. The majority of Chinese scholars assert that the difference is minor. Only a few scholars aver that the difference is irreconcilable. This consensus of scholarly opinions on the general works of Liu Zhi also carries forward to his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. The general consensus at this moment is that his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* aligns the five relationships with the Confucian five ethical codes. This section will survey the contemporary scholarship and critically assess two contemporary scholarly opinions on this particular work of Liu Zhi.

Ma Duoyong investigates the localization of Islam in China. From a historical perspective, he studies the dialogue between Islam and Confucianism.⁵⁷⁶ Ma asserts that Islamic writers, in particular Liu Zhi's *Rules and Principles of Islam*, absorb selectively and yet massively

⁵⁷⁵ Ding Hong 丁宏, 'About the Issue of Islam's Acclimatizing Itself to China's Society: From the Angle of Cultural Identification of Hui 從回族的文化認同看伊斯蘭教與中國社會相適應問題,' *N.W. Ethno-National Studies* 西北民族研究 No.2, 45 (2005) 77.

⁵⁷⁶ Ma Duoyong 馬多勇, 'The Dialogue between Islam and Confucianism and Cultural Self Consciousness in Chinese History 中國歷史上的回儒對話與文化自覺' (MA Thesis, Nanjing: Cadre Institute of CPC Jiangsu Provincial Commission Party School, no date).

the five codes of Confucianism which are championed by Zhu Xi, the great pioneer of Neo-Confucianism. The basic contents of the five relationships are almost the same as the five codes and give the impression that the Islamic ethics are Confucian-like. Liu Zhi's work selectively avoids any discussion that may minimize the core teaching of Islam. Not only does he put the husband and wife relationship as the first order of his five Islamic ethics, unlike the five codes, Liu Zhi was silent about particular matters of details, such as Muslim widows who could re-marry.⁵⁷⁷ Re-marriage was despised by Neo-Confucians who considered any virtuous widow should not re-marry. While Liu Zhi emphasized the loyalty of the courtiers to the emperor, he also used Qur'anic teachings that the emperor should know the real Lord and uphold righteousness because the Lord himself symbolized righteousness.⁵⁷⁸ Thus, the emperor was in fact under the rule of the real Lord and ruled his empire on behalf of the Real. The emperor should also imitate the sages who proclaimed the Lord's messages and be models and examples to others. Ma concludes that while the ethical systems of Islam and feudal Confucianism are different, they share the common and core concepts of piety and self-realization which closely integrate the two systems together. This integration transforms Islamic ethics into an Islamic ethical system with Chinese characteristics.⁵⁷⁹ There is a difference between the two systems. In choosing his materials selectively, Liu Zhi has adapted Islamic ethics and expressed them in Confucian terms.

Ma's view is representative of many scholars in China who support the adaptation and integration of Islam so that Islam in China has its own unique Chinese characteristics. Zhu Xiaojun supports Ma. In his short essay, Zhu avers that Liu Zhi's transference and transformation of the five Islamic relationships into the five codes of Confucianism are mutually beneficial to both Chinese and Islamic traditions in China. Also, Zhu asserts that this is the only plausible way for Islam to continue its existence in China and also safeguard its interests.⁵⁸⁰ After comparing the five relationships of Chinese Islam with the five codes of Confucianism, Shi Lili even declares that the writers of the *Han Kitab* proactively and

⁵⁷⁷ Ma, *Dialogue*, 26.

⁵⁷⁸ Ma, *Dialogue*, 27.

⁵⁷⁹ Ma, *Dialogue*, 28.

⁵⁸⁰ Zhu Xiaojun 朱小軍, 'Briefly Exploring Liu Zhi's Five Codes 清初回族學者劉智 '五典' 說探微,' *Journal of Xinzhou Teachers' University* Vol 24.4 (2008) 50.

strategically converge with the Chinese culture. Islam is thus almost sinicized by their tremendous effort of translation and transformation.⁵⁸¹

Another group of Chinese scholars are able to point out that while the Islamic rites in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* adapt to Neo-Confucianism, the two traditions have substantial differences and yet both benefit from the co-existence. Ji Fangtong examines the theory of self-cultivation between Islam and Confucianism in *The Nature and Principle in Islam*.⁵⁸² He argues with substantial evidence from some Neo-Confucian texts that Liu Zhi's understanding of self-realization has many resemblances and parallels with Neo-Confucianism with few insignificant differences in the true practice of the body, heart and nature.⁵⁸³ Ji acknowledges a major and essential difference. Liu Zhi's work emphasizes that the goal of self-realization is return to the Real and the method of eventual self-realization is annihilation.⁵⁸⁴ Ji concludes that despite the religious difference, human self-realization is a universal phenomenon. Thus, the integration of Liu Zhi's ideas and Neo-Confucianism is an asset for humanity.⁵⁸⁵

A similar view of adaptation and integration is presented by Hai Jing in his general study on filial piety and loyalty between Confucianism and Islam.⁵⁸⁶ Hai says that although Liu Zhi's understanding of the five relationships has its source from the teaching of *Hadith*, the philosophy and the layout of his argument has massive parallels with Confucian ideas.⁵⁸⁷ Hai asserts that with respect to the issue of filial piety, Liu Zhi and other *Han Kitab* writers completely adopted the Confucian five codes. With respect to the issue of loyalty to the

⁵⁸¹ Shi Lili 石麗麗, 'The Comparison between Five Ethics Thought of Confucianism and Five Ethics Thoughts of Chinese Islam 儒家 '五倫' 思想與中國伊斯蘭 '五典' 思想的比較' (MPhil. Thesis: Lanzhou, Northwest University for Nationalities, 2010).

⁵⁸² Ji Fangtong 季芳桐, 'Comparison of the Theory of Self-realization between Islam and Confucianism: Study on Qing Hui Scholar Liu Zhi and His Thoughts in Nature and Principle in Islam 回儒修養理論比較: 以清初回族思想家劉智 天方性理 為考察點,' *N.W. Ethno-National Studies* 46.3 (2005).

⁵⁸³ Ji, 'Comparison', 139-40.

⁵⁸⁴ Ji, 'Comparison', 141.

⁵⁸⁵ Ji, 'Comparison', 142.

⁵⁸⁶ Hai Jing 海敬, *A Comparative Study on Attitude toward 'Filial Piety' and Conscientiousness between Confucianism and Islam 儒家和中國伊斯蘭教 '忠孝觀' 比較研究* (MPhil. Thesis, Lanzhou: Northwest University for Nationalities, 2011).

⁵⁸⁷ Hai, 'Comparative Study,' 40.

emperor, they articulately transformed into a dual loyalty to both the Real Ruler and the emperor. Hai Jing notes that to be loyal to the emperor is not necessarily to be disobedient to the Real Ruler. The two loyalties are not in antithesis. Such re-adjustment of the meaning of loyalty is able to reconcile the difference between the two ethical systems.⁵⁸⁸ Another well-known scholar of Liu Zhi is Sha Zhongpin who examines specifically Liu Zhi's way of humanity.⁵⁸⁹ Sha avers that both Liu Zhi and Neo-Confucians teach the way of heaven and the way of humanity. These two ways are not mutually exclusive but they are two aspects of the same self-realization. Sha concludes that in constructing an ethical thought system for the Hui Muslims, Liu Zhi's ethics have both outward form and inward spirit. The form is taken from Chinese culture and the spirit from Arabic Islam.

Thus, the general scholarly consensus from contemporary Chinese scholars asserts that Liu Zhi's ethical system, in particular his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, is Confucianized although he is articulate enough to maintain an Islamic framework or goal. Admittedly, there is a variable difference in degree of Confucianization among scholars.

It should be noted that there is a minority view which differs from the above majority view in China. After examining *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, Guo Suxing and Sun Zhenyu in their short essay modestly expound several key themes in Liu Zhi's work.⁵⁹⁰ Their analytical exposition is based on a careful reading of the whole range of Liu Zhi's works. Firstly, Liu Zhi favours the heavenly principle, namely the way of the sages as required by the Real Ruler, though the way of humankind is not ignored. Secondly, the role of Islamic rites is to return to the Real and this aspect is silent in Neo-Confucianism. Thirdly, Muslims should have righteous deeds. Fourthly, while Islam emphasizes the religious teachings, it also integrates with the secular teachings of self-realization. The

⁵⁸⁸ Hai, 'Comparative Study,' 40.

⁵⁸⁹ Sha Zhongpin 沙宗平, 'Examining the Hui Islamic Ethics from Liu Zhi's Five Relationships of the Way of Humanity 從劉智的“人道五典”看回族伊斯蘭倫理,' (Lecture Note, Shihezi: Shihezi University, Xinjiang, 2004).

⁵⁹⁰ Guo Suming, Sun Zhenyu 郭蘇星, 孫振玉 'On Liu Zhi's Islamic Thought 劉智的教論,' *Yin Shan Academic Journal* 24.6 (2011) 108-115.

religious teachings are exemplified by the Islamic sages. The secular teachings are to emphasize strict morality in human relationships.⁵⁹¹

While the work of Guo and Sun is not explicitly contrary to the common consensus, there is a scholar who explicitly disagrees with the majority view. Min Wenjie specifically examines and compares Liu Zhi's five relationships with the Confucian five codes in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.⁵⁹² He says that the usual practice of investigating the dialogue between Islam and Confucianism tends to emphasize the common ground in both traditions. However, he emphasizes the qualitative differences.⁵⁹³ He points out briefly five essential differences.

Firstly, the five relationships are divinely ordained and commanded by the Islamic sacred scriptures. Confucianism has developed in its long history through alteration and enrichment by sages.

Secondly, the order of the five relationships is different from the five codes. Liu Zhi put the husband and wife relationship first because of the teaching of the Qur'an and *Hadith*. The creator created Adam and his wife. Their descendants multiplied and spread to become the whole humankind. Thus, the husband and wife relationship is first in the order of Liu Zhi's Islamic ethics.

Thirdly, it should be noted that the Qur'an and *Hadith* do not teach merely 'five' Islamic ethics of human relationships. The Islamic sacred texts do teach a wide range of human relationships in minute detail. Thus, Min asserts that Liu Zhi selectively chose only five because of his strategic method of communicating Islamic teachings using well-established Confucian terms and practices.

⁵⁹¹ Guo, 'Liu Zhi's Islamic Thought,' 109-114.

⁵⁹² Min Wenjie 敏文杰, 'The Comparison between Five Ethics of Confucianism and Five Ethics of Liu Zhi's Thought 儒家'五倫'思想和劉智'五典'之比較,' *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies* 65.1 (2007) 32-36.

⁵⁹³ Min, 'Comparison,' 32.

Fourthly, Confucian codes are concerned with the order of human relationships in a feudal society. Islamic ethics are applicable for the sake of this life and the afterlife.

Finally, Islam has a strong view of the mandate or predestination of the Real Ruler and eventual return to him. The Real Ruler is to reward or punish humankind according to the deeds of this life on the Day of Judgment. There is no equivalent concept in Confucianism.⁵⁹⁴ Min says that by popularizing the five relationships of Islam using the Confucian five codes among both the literati and the ordinary Han Chinese, other teachings of Islam are more easily accepted by Muslims and non-Muslims. He concludes that contemporary scholars who compare Islamic and Confucian ethical teachings should be cautious and avoid misinterpreting the basic spirit of Islamic ethical thought.⁵⁹⁵ This present research work stands with the minority view, namely Min's view and agrees with the reading and comments of Guo and Sun on Liu Zhi's works.

6.2.2 A Critical Assessment of Contemporary Scholarship on Rules and Proprieties of Islam

Substantial monograph-level studies on *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* have been completed by Liang Xiangming in China and James Frankel in America. There are two main reasons to choose Frankel and Liang. Firstly, this present work is more focused on Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Only Frankel and Liang have done more substantial research on this work. Murata and Yin have studied very thoroughly Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam*. They have focused more on cosmogony, divine disclosure and anthropology. Thus they are not chosen for assessment. Secondly, Frankel and Liang are chosen because they reflect two different perspectives on Liu Zhi's work. While Liang's analysis reflects his understanding of Liu Zhi in engagement more with his contemporary Chinese scholars, Frankel's work reflects his understanding of Liu Zhi in

⁵⁹⁴ Min, 'Comparison,' 33-36.

⁵⁹⁵ Min, 'Comparison,' 36.

engagement more with contemporary Western scholarly research within the general Neo-Confucian context.

(1) James Frankel's Works

Frankel's published book relates to Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, in particular the first few chapters. Frankel has published a few essays on Chinese Islam.⁵⁹⁶ Liang has published several academic articles in Chinese journals on Liu Zhi during the last fifteen years.⁵⁹⁷ Two important book-length studies related to Liu Zhi's works have also been published.⁵⁹⁸

Frankel has made a great contribution to highlight the significance of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* in the *Han Kitab*. He also praises the literary erudition of this work. Frankel's substantial monograph asserts three main points. Firstly, in his support of Benite's thesis, he avers that the identity of Hui Muslims in late Ming and early Qing dynasties is Muslim and Chinese simultaneously. In other words, part of Liu Zhi's work is to raise the Hui Muslims' awareness of their Islamic and Chinese dual inheritance.

⁵⁹⁶ Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name* and his *Liu's Journey*. It should be noted that Frankel's PhD thesis often quotes the Chinese texts and the corresponding English translations. However, the Chinese texts are missing in his book. See also James D. Frankel, 'From Monolith to Mosaic: A Decade of Twenty-First Century Studies of Muslims and Islam in China,' *Religious Studies Review* 37.4 (2011) 249-58. James D. Frankel, 'Uncontrived Concord: the Eclectic Sources and Syncretic Theories of Liu Zhi, a Chinese Muslim Scholar,' *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20.1 (2009) 46-54. James D. Frankel, 'Apoliticization: One Facet of Chinese Islam,' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28.3 (2008) 421-34.

⁵⁹⁷ Liang Xiangming 梁向明, 'On Political Ethics of Hui Nationality of Being Obedient to Allah and Loyal to the King 回族“順主忠君”政治倫理思想簡論,' *Nationalities Research in Qinghai* 20.3 (2009) 53-58; Liang Xiangming 梁向明, 'On Traditional Ethics of the Hui Family 略論回族傳統家庭倫理思想,' *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies* 65.1 (2007) 37-44; Liang Xiangming 梁向明, 'The View of the Hui Scholar Liu Zhi on Islam 論回族學者劉智的伊斯蘭教觀,' *Heilongjiang National Series* 76 (2003) 120-24; Liang Xiangming 梁向明, 'An Analysis of the Epistemology of "Harmony of God and Man" by Liu Zhi', 淺析回族宗教學者劉智“神人合一”的認識論,' *N.W. Minorities Research* 29 (2001) 86-92; Liang Xiangming 梁向明, 'Liu Zhi: Using Confucianism to Interpret Islam or Discarding Scripture and Tradition 兼談回族學者劉智從事漢文譯著的時空背景,' *Researches on the Hui* 60 (2001) 88-91.

⁵⁹⁸ Liang Xiangming 梁向明, *The Study on Ethics of Three Chinese Translators During the Late Ming Dynasty to the Early Qing Dynasty 明末清初回族三大漢文譯著家倫理思想研究* (Beijing: Guangming Daily Press, 2010). This is the published version of his PhD thesis in 2007. Liang Xiangming, 梁向明, 'The Study on Ethics of Three Chinese Translators During the Late Ming Dynasty to the Early Qing Dynasty 明末清初回族三大漢文譯著家倫理思想研究' (PhD Thesis, Beijing: Minzu University of China, 2007).

Secondly, he asserts that the concept of law *or shari‘a* in Liu Zhi’s *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* is both to regulate behaviour and prescribe a path for religious endeavour. In agreement with Murata, he says that Liu Zhi’s concept of *shari‘a* is dependent heavily on Sufi thought.

Finally, Frankel explains that Liu Zhi carefully searches for Allah’s Chinese name in the monotheistic antecedents in the Chinese tradition. Frankel believes that Liu Zhi’s search is primarily influenced by the sixteenth century Jesuits in China and Chinese Jews secondarily. The term *zhu* or ‘lord’ is adopted eventually because ‘the fact that Nestorians had already established this as a term suitable for monotheistic theology in the stele inscription of 781, followed later by the Jesuit coinage of the title *tianzhu*, “Lord of Heaven”, set a precedent for Muslim writers to follow.’⁵⁹⁹ The central thesis of Frankel’s monograph is that:

Accommodating his [Liu Zhi’s] thought to the rational standard of contemporary Chinese thought, in his presentation of Islam Liu Zhi downplayed the role of revelation, expounding instead theological concepts, with frequent reference to natural law and sophisticated metaphysical arguments of Neo-Confucian *lixue* (lit. “study of principle”). In terms of Islamic orthopraxy, he harmonized Muslim religious practice with the Confucian principle of ritual (*li*), thus demonstrating that Islam is built upon the same central pillar of civilization as Confucian culture is.⁶⁰⁰

Also, Frankel concludes his assessment of Liu Zhi’s contextualization. One should also note that Frankel prefers the term accommodation to contextualization.

Liu Zhi constructed effective arguments for the harmonization of Confucian and Islamic ideas of morality and ethics, hinging upon the concept of ritual. And while he did manage to syncretize certain important metaphysical concepts of the two traditions, he ultimately could not bridge the theological gap that divided them. Yet syncretism was Liu Zhi’s method, not his goal — promoting better understanding of Islam was.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁹ Frankel, *Rectifying*, 160.

⁶⁰⁰ Frankel, *Rectifying*, xix-xx.

⁶⁰¹ Frankel, *Rectifying*, 180.

Frankel's study on Liu Zhi in particular and *Han Kitab* in general gives a cautious and helpful insight for any contemporary study and scholarship of these Chinese Muslim literati whose existence was challenged by the hegemonic Chinese civilization in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Frankel's view is that

It is not that conflict and concord are not prominent features of Chinese Muslim history; they certainly are ... The concord, or harmonization, that many observe in the writings of the Chinese Muslim literati elite ... was the organic product of individual minds, acting in a communal and generational context, in an effort to make sense of a hybrid intellectual, cultural and religious heritage.⁶⁰²

Thus, in terms of contextualization Frankel argues for a hybrid and organic relationship between Hui Muslim thought and Neo-Confucianism.

(2) Liang Xiangming's Works

While Frankel's work involves both Chinese and Arabic sources, Liang's work focuses primarily on the Chinese sources and contexts. While Frankel's work focuses more on Liu Zhi's early chapters of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, Liang's work examines more thoroughly many works of Liu Zhi including close reading of Islamic ethics in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Liang notes that Liu Zhi's task is difficult because Arabic religious and philological concepts are not easy to translate into Confucian terms. In *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, Liang notes that the content is concerned with fundamental Islamic doctrines, both theoretical and practical aspects. Liang also avers that Liu Zhi used Confucian concepts and ideologies merely to express his doctrinal teachings. Liang describes Liu Zhi's work as Islamic doctrinal teachings with Chinese characteristics.⁶⁰³ In his study on Liu Zhi's Islamic ethics in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, Liang agrees with the majority view that Liu Zhi intentionally contextualized the Islamic five

⁶⁰² Frankel, 'Uncontrived Concord,' 46.

⁶⁰³ Liang, 'Using Confucianism to Interpret Islam,' 90.

relationships into the Confucian five ethical codes. However, Liang admits that such contextualization of Islam into Chinese culture is subtle and articulate.

Liang says that the first point of Liu Zhi's contextualization is flexibility. Confucian teaching insists on a courtier's obedience to the emperor to the extent that when the emperor orders him to die, the courtier should obey. While Liu Zhi followed the Confucian five ethical codes and insisted on the obedience of the courtier to the emperor, he also used Qur'anic verses (an example like the story of King David) and *Hadith* to command the emperor that he should rule righteously and under the sovereignty of the Real Ruler.⁶⁰⁴ The second point of contextualization is Liu Zhi's insistence on both the way of heaven and way of humanity. While the five relationships are the way of humanity, it is the five endeavours that are the way of heaven. The way of heaven represents the distinctive Islamic worldview with its emphasis on afterlife and the spiritual aspects of Islamic rites. The Confucian worldview has more to say on human ethical relationships and very little on the afterlife.

Liang views Liu Zhi's works as a subtle, articulate and creative contextualization of Islam into the Chinese culture. With respect to cosmogony and epistemology, Liang says that Liu Zhi used Confucianism as his means to communicate Islamic teachings. However, with respect to an ethical system, Liang avers that Liu Zhi's Islamic ethics were enriched by Confucianism. Liang concludes that while the Islamic practices serve as the form, it is the Confucian five relationships that are the core contents of Liu Zhi's ethical system.⁶⁰⁵

In addition to a specific examination of Islamic ethics in *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, Liang also examines Liu Zhi's works in general. He has made several general observations. Firstly, Liang asserts that while Liu Zhi's cosmogony was primarily influenced by theoretical Sufism, his exposition was eclectic using philosophical ideas from Daoism,

⁶⁰⁴ Liang, *Study on Ethics*, 137.

⁶⁰⁵ Liang, *Study on Ethics*, 133-34.

Buddhism and both the Principle and Mind School of Neo-Confucianism.⁶⁰⁶ While his exposition was eclectic, Liu Zhi truly maintained his Islamic foundation and theology. Liang says that Liu Zhi held firm to the fundamental Islamic tenets that the real Lord is one and unique and also Muhammad is the ultimate prophet. There is no more Islamic prophet after him. Liang avers that this fundamental belief of Liu Zhi never disappears despite his contextualization of Islam to the Chinese culture.⁶⁰⁷

Secondly, Liang asserts that the doctrine of the unity of existence forms the overarching principle by which Liu Zhi integrated his various teachings of ontology, cosmogony, epistemology and ethics.⁶⁰⁸ His doctrine of the unity of existence is influenced clearly by mysticism.⁶⁰⁹ The significance of this doctrine is primarily concerned with the knowledge of the Real Ruler. The Ruler reveals itself to creation by both invisible and visible manifestations. Humankind can know the Real Ruler by the way of heaven and the way of humanity paying careful attention to the true practice of the body and heart.⁶¹⁰ Liu Zhi's teaching on the true practice of the heart is explicitly influenced by Sufism.⁶¹¹

Thirdly, Liang argues that Liu Zhi made compromise in his political view. Liu Zhi taught that the emperor was a 'representative' of the Real Ruler. That is, the emperor was the agent on behalf of the Ruler to govern the state. Anyone who prayed to the Ruler and ignored the emperor made no prayer to the Ruler at all. Liang concludes that in this particular view, Liu Zhi made compromise and his political view was explicitly Confucianized.⁶¹²

Finally, Liang supports the view that Liu Zhi's works primarily aim to expound Islamic doctrines and use Confucian concepts, logics and thinking method as interpretative tools

⁶⁰⁶ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 32, 33, 44, 48.

⁶⁰⁷ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 52.

⁶⁰⁸ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 49, 57-62.

⁶⁰⁹ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 57.

⁶¹⁰ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 62-73.

⁶¹¹ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 74.

⁶¹² Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 85.

(以儒詮經).⁶¹³ Confucianism is just a means and not an end. The result is not merely a better understanding of Islam by Muslims and less misunderstanding of Islam by the majority Han Chinese. It also has the effect of mutual enrichment and complementarity between Islam and Chinese culture especially in the area of ethical thinking and human self-realization.⁶¹⁴ It achieves such a satisfactory effect because of Liu Zhi's flexible method and appropriate artifice in his interpretation.⁶¹⁵ Has Liu Zhi betrayed his Islamic original teaching? Liang asserts that a long period of continuous contextualization of Islam into Chinese culture has gone through a process of co-existence, exchange and integration. Such a long process of contextualization has brought enrichment to the Chinese culture including astronomy, medicine, and architecture by the arrival and continual influence of Islam. This contextualization has thus exceeded the religious boundary.⁶¹⁶ Liang concludes that Liu Zhi's works are truly Islamic and have not betrayed at all the principle of beliefs in Islam.⁶¹⁷ In essence, Liang argues that Liu Zhi has Confucianized his Islamic ethics but not his basic tenets of Islamic belief.

(3) *A Critical Assessment of Frankel and Liang*

Admittedly, the two scholars have made scholarly advances in the study of Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* and provided a better understanding of Islamic rites within the Confucian cultural background. Their contributions complement the recent research in the study of Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam* by Murata and Jin. This critical assessment of the two contemporary scholars can cover various aspects from comparative religious studies to self-realization and return to the Real Ruler. However, this study focuses on the issue of unity of existence and Sufi spirituality by Liu Zhi. Several critical comments may be made.

⁶¹³ Liang makes helpful and general comments on various scholarly models about Lu Zhi's adaptations. See Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 161-62.

⁶¹⁴ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 164.

⁶¹⁵ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 165.

⁶¹⁶ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 167.

⁶¹⁷ Liang, *Study of Liu Zhi*, 198.

Firstly: while both Xiang and Frankel admit the influence of Sufism on Liu Zhi's works, their investigation is not detailed enough to provide an Islamic context to explicate Liu Zhi's explicit Ibn 'Arabi tradition. Other scholars, namely, Murata and Yin have paid careful attention to Liu Zhi's Islamic tradition. When Murata examines Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle in Islam*, she often refers back to the Ibn 'Arabi tradition and Liu Zhi's quoted Sufi books in order to make sense of the meaning of various Chinese terms used by Liu Zhi. Moreover, she also refers to the later Arabic translation of *The Nature and Principle in Islam* by Ma Lianyuan, who is also known as Nur al-Haqq and Ma's Arabic translation has helped her to work out some of the difficult meanings of Liu Zhi's Chinese terms.⁶¹⁸ The strongest evidence that Liu Zhi is influenced by the Ibn 'Arabi tradition is his translation of Jami's *Lawa'ih* into *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* in Chinese. Similarly, Yin also pays attention to Liu Zhi's Sufi sources and discusses their significance among Hui Muslims in their Scripture Hall Education System. Yin provides a detailed essay on Sufism in China and indirectly provides a detailed account of Liu Zhi's Sufi context.⁶¹⁹ Thus, the Islamic tradition of Liu Zhi has been carefully investigated by Murata and Yin. While both Frankel and Liang acknowledge that Liu Zhi was influenced by his tradition, both of them pay insufficient attention to Sufi influence in their interpretation.

Secondly, both Frankel and Liang have not sufficiently attended to the mystical role of the Utmost Sage, Muhammad in the Sufi tradition. This unique role of the prophet Muhammad has been discussed in the last chapter. The exemplary role of the Utmost Sage is vital and he is the perfect exemplar of all sages in Islam. He is also the sole vicegerent of humankind. He guides and enables all Muslims in their spiritual quests. The role of the Utmost Sage is important in both the innate heaven and the acquired heaven. In Liu Zhi's concept of the unity of existence, the Muhammadan Spirit (such as the concept of the nature of continuity of the Utmost Sage) gives rise to creation and humanity. Muslims are enabled by the Utmost Sage in their return to the Real Ruler. Both Frankel and Liang are willing to

⁶¹⁸ Murata, *Sage*, 15.

⁶¹⁹ Jin, *Sufism in China*, 123-212.

acknowledge the significance of Ibn ‘Arabi’s unity of existence. Again, both of them give insufficient attention to the role of the prophet Muhammad. Liang is able to give an account of Liu Zhi’s Islamic worldview including the unity of existence and the role of Islamic ethics within such a worldview. However, Frankel gives more attention to the simultaneous Chinese-Muslim identity of the Hui and Liu Zhi’s search for the Islamic name of God in Chinese. Frankel does not say much about the Utmost Sage but this is not the focus of his study. This second critique is in continuation of the first critique in that had Frankel and Liang paid sufficient attention to the Sufi context and the mystical tradition of the Utmost Sage in the writings of Liu Zhi, their studies would have greater insights.

Finally, we should consider their arguments about Liu Zhi’s contextualization. Both Frankel and Liang have found it difficult to articulate a consistent strategy in Liu Zhi’s contextualization. Frankel argues that Liu Zhi’s method is syncretic but syncretism is not his goal. It is a means to an end. Also, Liu Zhi downplayed divine revelation and managed to harmonize Islamic practices with Confucian culture. In essence, Liu Zhi’s Islam adapted merely the form of Confucianism. Thus, Frankel has not taken the side of the majority view. While Liang affirms that Liu Zhi’s Islam is an adapted and subtle Islam with Chinese characteristics, in particular his political emphasis of Muslim loyalty to the imperial rulers, he also says that Liu Zhi adhered to the basic tenets of Islam. Thus, both of them find it difficult to give a neat, simple and direct statement of Liu Zhi’s contextualization.

A brief recapitulation of the successful contextualization by the Jesuit missionary Ricci Matteo in 17th-century China is helpful. Matteo’s contextualization can be similarly interpreted as a dialectical model of contextual theology. Later, the Jesuit mission in China faded away because of the rite controversy between the Qing Emperor Kangxi and the Pope in the Vatican. Liu Zhi employed a similar but not the same strategy. Recent contemporary cross-cultural study emphasizes dialectical engagement.⁶²⁰ Angie Pears avers that dialectical engagement is to avoid polarizing positions of continuity and discontinuity.⁶²¹

⁶²⁰ Contextual theology and dialectical engagement will be discussed in greater detail in chapter seven.

⁶²¹ Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (Florence: Routledge, 2009) 1-49.

The two poles are really related to each other through creative interaction and also through critical affirmation and rejection of cultures. It means that the husk can synthesize with Chinese culture but the kernel is supracultural, namely context oriented and yet text-based.

Liu Zhi's model of contextualization has an irenic spirit. It is not confrontational, possibly avoiding the mistakes that later Jesuit missionaries made in 18th-century China. His model is definitely not setting the Hui Muslims up against other non-Muslims in China. His goal is to encourage Hui Muslims' right understanding, doing and eventual unveiling without any alienation with the Chinese culture. Thus, his contextualization is strategically dialogical. His translation of Islamic texts has followed the similar strategy of his well-known predecessor Wang Daiyu in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. Liu Zhi's dialectical engagement is context-oriented, always in conversation with the Chinese culture but his content is supracultural and based on Islamic text. His model of contextualization is known as translation-conversation model.⁶²² The context and content are held dialectically in creative interaction. It is neither Confucianization nor mere adaptation of the form of Confucianism. His contextualization encapsulates the dialectical engagement, sensitive to the Confucian cultural context and faithful to the Islamic tradition.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter translated and analysed the first five chapters of *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam* with special reference to Liu Zhi's model of contextualization. The first part of the chapter examined each chapter of his work individually. The second part critically commented on contemporary scholarship on Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. We have shown that while Liu Zhi claimed in his author's preface that his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* was no different from Neo-Confucian works, this claim should be understood in the context of learning and understanding the rites of Islam. That is, the process of learning Islamic rites is no different from learning Neo-Confucian classical

⁶²² This model will be further discussed in the final chapter.

works. Scholars often quote this claim and erroneously assume that Liu Zhi's Islam is Confucianized.

In the first part of this chapter, we have shown that Liu Zhi interpreted the five endeavours or pillars of Islam in Islamic terms as the way of heaven and the five ethical human relationships in Confucian terms as the way of humanity. The two ways should be distinguished and yet not separated. The aim of Islamic rules and proprieties is to know the Real and the goal is to return to the Real. As noted, Liu Zhi emphasized the role of the heart in Islamic rites. Liu Zhi contextualized the role of the heart according to the School of Mind in Neo-Confucianism. In Liu Zhi's contextualialization, he was willing to employ any school of thought in Neo-Confucianism as long as he could explain the meaning of Islamic rites and also the need for purity of heart.

The second part of this chapter discussed the scholarly debate between J. Frankel and X. Liang on Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Frankel avers that Liu Zhi might be influenced by the 17th-18th century Jesuits in China and their strategy of accommodation or adaptation to Chinese contexts. Frankel argues that syncretism was Liu Zhi's method but his goal was to promote better understanding of Islam. Liang asserts that Liu Zhi's contextualization of Islam into Chinese culture is subtle, articulate and creative. Liang argues that Confucianism is just a means and not an end. Not only did Liu Zhi's contextualization promote better understanding of Islam, but he was also able to bring mutual enrichment and complementarity between Islamic and Chinese cultures especially in the area of ethical thinking and human self-realization. We have shown and argued that both Frankel and Liang have provided insights into Liu Zhi's contextualization but they find it difficult to give a neat, simple and direct statement of Liu Zhi's model of contextualization.

It is concluded that Liu Zhi's contextualization engages in active dialogue with Chinese contexts. His strategy is context oriented and yet text-based. The model is the translation-conversation model which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven: Model of Contextualization, Contemporary Relsevance and Final Conclusion

7.1 Liu Zhi's Translation-conversation Model of Contextualization

In chapter one of this study, we discussed the six models of contextualization by Bevans. He notes that two or more models might be operating in a particular context. Based on the results of our investigation, this study selects a composite model. That is, Liu Zhi used the translation-conversation model in his contextualization of the Islamic tradition. He is an erudite Islamic scholar and a skilful cultural agent. Liu Zhi's contextualization presented a vital, transformative and contemporary expression of Islam in the Neo-Confucian context.

Liu Zhi's translation-conversation model of contextualization has several characteristics. Firstly, Liu Zhi was in dialogue with several cultural frameworks: Buddhism, Daoism and Neo-Confucianism. He was not merely interested in the School of Principle and the School of Mind in Neo-Confucianism. He was also in conversation with all aspects of the diverse Chinese cultures of his time. He was possibly aware of the Catholic missionary Matteo Ricci's approach of contextualization and might have read Jesuit books or translated texts.

Secondly, Liu Zhi's contextualization adopted the various strengths of both translation and conversation models as discussed by Bevans and yet simultaneously reduced the built-in dangers of the two models. Bevans avers that the translation model persistently preserves the basic tenets of belief. Thus, the contextual situation ultimately is the vehicle of the basic message of religious faith. The context is always a secondary element. The major strength of the translation model is its safeguard of the integrity of the basic tenets of belief and the Islamic tradition. With respect to the conversation model, its major strength is its emphasis both on the uniqueness of Chinese culture and its complementarity with the basic Islamic tenets of belief. With such positive attitudes to culture and by the process of genuine conversation between the dialogical partners of Islam and diverse Chinese cultures, Liu Zhi seeks to create a deep and renewed expression of Islam. The goal of conversation is that each partner can learn from the other, and each can profit from the other.

Liu Zhi's translation-conversation model of contextualization demonstrates that he upheld the basic tenets of Islam, including the unity of divine existence, return to the Real in the afterlife and the basic five pillars of Islam. Without any sign of compromise in his contextualization, Liu Zhi emphasized the sole existence of the divine being, the unique role of the last prophet Muhammad, the ultimate authority of the Qur'an and the divine revelation of the five pillars. Also, he readily employed both Neo-Platonic and Neo-Confucian concepts and terms to explain Islamic cosmogony. He used the idea of the innate and the acquired heaven to explain his Islamic worldview. Moreover, he employed well known concepts of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation to explain Islamic and Sufi spirituality. The most distinctive and creative expression of his contextualization was his affirmation of dual loyalty to both the divine being and the imperial non-Islamic rulers. Loyalty to the imperial ruler did not compromise any faithfulness to the divine being.

Finally, this model of contextualization can satisfactorily explain the modern opinions among both Chinese and English scholars. Many Chinese scholars note Liu Zhi's articulate contextualization by a careful and extensive use of Neo-Confucianism. Not surprisingly, some of them have commented that Liu Zhi's Islam was fully sinicized. Also, a few Chinese scholars note that Liu Zhi selectively used Neo-Confucianism. These few scholars assert that while Liu Zhi's five Islamic ethical relationships are very similar to the Neo-Confucian five merits, Liu Zhi's framework of such relationships was clearly based on a unique Islamic concept. In addition, Liu Zhi altered and re-arranged the order of the five relationships in accordance with Islamic values. Almost all the contemporary Chinese scholars agree that Liu Zhi's contextualization was able to enrich Neo-Confucianism with Islamic culture. All these comments bear the hallmark of the conversation model, namely a Hegelian sense of synthesis. On the other hand, the English speaking scholars are able to clearly illustrate Liu Zhi's faithful use of Persian and Arabic Islamic sources. Thus, Liu Zhi's translation and exposition of the Ibn 'Arabi tradition was conservative. Liu Zhi was an erudite scholar in his translation and exposition of difficult Islamic concepts. Simply put, his strategy is context oriented and yet text-based.

The following is a summary of the main characteristics of Liu Zhi's translation-conversation model of contextualization that this study has demonstrated:

- Liu Zhi upholds the divine authority of the sacred texts, especially the Qu'ran, and highly valued his received tradition. Revelation is primarily propositional.
- His translation emphasizes both the exoteric and esoteric interpretations of Islamic texts. In his transmission of Islamic texts, Liu Zhi apparently chooses the Islamic texts selectively. He also expands the meaning of the texts in his interpretation and yet he is in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition of Islam.
- His exposition and explanation of Islamic thought are expressed mainly, but not exclusively, in Confucian terms.
- His engagement with Chinese culture is by active dialogue or conversation. He builds bridges between Islamic thought and the Confucian context, so that Muslims in their own Chinese contexts could understand the Islamic messages in the Chinese texts.
- His contextualization interplays the experience of the past (Scripture and tradition) with the experience of the presence (experience, culture, social location and social change).
- In his engagement with the Confucian concept of self-cultivation, he contextualizes it as Sufi spirituality.
- He upholds the teachings of ancient Chinese sages and understands Chinese culture as a partner of Islamic teaching. However, Liu Zhi insists that while the Prophet Muhammad was understood as the Utmost Sage, he was unique and superior to all other sages.

In view of the above characteristics of Liu Zhi's contextualization, it is best to describe Liu Zhi's model as translation-conversation. This model can also be understood as a movement of descent and ascent. His work of translation is to communicate the Islamic message in the language and culture of real people in their contexts. He seeks to build bridges between divine revelation and the human context. This is a movement from the revealed text to the context. In addition, he engages and adaptes the Confucian concept of self-cultivation as Sufi spirituality. This is a movement from below, or from the human context, back to the divine text, or where God wants humans to be. Both the concept of Confucian self-

cultivation and the concept of Sufi return to the Real Ruler are understood as a single process of transformation. For Liu Zhi, this transformation includes individuals, as well as corporate and cultural systems. For the Muslim readers of Liu Zhi's works, their way or *dao* of Muslim living could be understood as Confucian self-cultivation.

7.2 Triangulating the Text, Culture and Wisdom in the Neo-Confucian Context

Liu Zhi was an erudite translator of Persian or Arabic text, well versed in his own Islamic tradition. Also, he was a competent cultural reader, well versed in his Neo-Confucian tradition. This present study has shown that Liu Zhi's contextualization has been effective because while he transmitted his Islamic tradition in Neo-Confucian culture, he contextualized it by triangulating text, culture and wisdom together.⁶²⁴ Thus, while the form of contextualization is translation-conversation, the content is triangulation of text translation, culture adaption and spiritual wisdom.

The reasons for the appearance and common usage of *Han Kitab* (Islamic texts in Chinese) in Islamic education halls are many and should be carefully studied within the historical setting, philosophical thoughts and religious activities of that time. Firstly, in the case of the Nanjing Muslim literati of 17th-18th century China, namely Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, the reasons for *Han Kitab* were as follows:

- defend the strange ritual practices,
- strengthen the Hui Islamic and cultural identity,
- achieve the balance of both exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islam,
- contextualize Chinese Sufism in the 17th century,
- adapt to the increasing imperial control in the Chinese language context and

⁶²⁴ This view owes much to Kevin Vanhoozer's hermeneutical methodology. See Kevin Vanhoozer, 'On the Very Idea of a Theological System: An Essay in Aid of Triangulating Scripture, Church and World' in A.T.B. McGowan (ed.), *Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006) 125-182. While Vanhoozer triangulates between Scripture, church and the world or words, God's Word and the world, this study triangulates between text, culture and practical wisdom.

- provide some user-friendly textbooks, poems, tracts and teaching aids for the Scripture Hall Education System.

Secondly, Liu Zhi sought to find an effective method of transmission embracing both translation of texts and dialogical engagement with the Chinese culture. He triangulated three aspects, namely creative translation of text, articulated interpretation of the Chinese culture and practical wisdom. Triangulation involves communicative interaction. It discards the subject/object dichotomy. That is, both the sacred text and Chinese culture interact with the world of practical wisdom. Putting this into Liu Zhi's context, both Islam and Neo-Confucianism are subjects and they communicatively interact with the world of wisdom in 17th-century China.

7.3 A Summary of Liu Zhi's Translation-conversation Model of Contextualization

The following table is a summary of Liu Zhi's method of contextualization as discussed in this study. None of the following points has been noted and discussed by scholars in English and Chinese with exceptions mentioned in the footnote.

Topic	Various Aspects of Liu Zhi's Contextualization
Liu Zhi's Use of Chinese Contexts	<p>1.0 <i>The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon</i>: very eclectic and use Confucian, Buddhist and to a lesser degree Daoist terms</p> <p>2.0 <i>The Nature and Principle in Islam</i>: Mainly use Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi's cosmological terms i.e. Neo-Confucian terms⁶²⁵</p> <p>3.0 <i>The Rules and Proprieties of Islam</i>: The Islamic concept in the second half of this work is interpreted in Confucianized term but the first half is not so obvious.</p> <p>4.0 <i>The True Record of the Utmost Sage</i>: Muhammad is interpreted as the Utmost Sage. As a whole, use few Confucian terms except one</p>

⁶²⁵ This point has been noted and discussed by Jin, Murata and others.

	appendice chapter at the end.
Liu Zhi's Pedagogical Method in his Works	<p>1.0 <i>The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon</i> : Articulate Confucian literary style and ease of memorization</p> <p>2.0 <i>The Nature and Principle in Islam</i> : Diagram and explanation</p> <p>3.0 <i>The Rules and Proprieties of Islam</i>: Text, commentary, annotation and illustration</p> <p>4.0 <i>The True Record of the Utmost Sage</i>: Narrative, drama, mythical story and Chinese history</p>
Text and Context	While the authoritative text remains unchanged, the application of the principle of rules and proprieties of Islam should be flexible and adaptive in various contexts. Progress is made when such application is fair and not offending to the community in the contexts at that time.
Sufi Wisdom	<p>1.0 <i>Shari'a</i> law: Rites are based on the revealed text.</p> <p>2.0 <i>Tariqa</i>: the Sufi path begins with a pure, sincere and virtuous <i>dao</i> heart without any obscuring. <i>Dao</i> heart works together with real nature and then can 'see'</p> <p>3.0 <i>Haqiqa</i>: unveiling and return to the Real One; the vital role of the Utmost Sage⁶²⁶</p>
Knowledge of Rites and the Real Ruler	<p>1.0 Right understanding: the School of Principle; investigation of things and the extension of knowledge</p> <p>2.0 Right doing: the School of Mind; a pure <i>dao</i> heart without any obscuring leading to virtuous action</p> <p>3.0 Union with the Real Ruler: the goal of union is similar to other Chinese thoughts:</p> <p>3.1 Treasure in the deep sea and Buddhist enlightenment</p> <p>3.2 Daoist's exalted state of existence and the perfect man</p> <p>3.3 School of Mind: the concept of the Great Man who unites Heaven and Earth</p>

⁶²⁶ Murata, *Sage*, 71, 452.

We have shown that Liu Zhi's contextualization is by using the translation-conversation model. This conclusion is the result of research after translating, examining and critically commenting on Liu Zhi's major and some of his minor works. This model of contextualization provides a more convincingly explanation of existing arguments proposed by both Western and Chinese scholars on Liu Zhi's works. The following statements of his contextualization can be noted:

- 1.0 In general, all of Liu Zhi's works are contextualized and should be known as contextual theology.
- 2.0 With respect to his trilogy, the most contextualized work is his *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. It is followed by *The Nature and Principle in Islam* and the least is *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*.
- 3.0 In *The Nature and Principle in Islam*, Liu Zhi used Neo-Confucian terms and concepts to explain the great transformation using the innate heaven and the acquired heaven. Human composition and social class divisions are also explained in Neo-Confucian terms. However, the theological framework is based on the worldview and tradition of Ibn 'Arabi.
- 4.0 In *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*, Liu Zhi made little effort to contextualize the prophet Muhammad except a chapter in the appendice.
- 5.0 In *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, Liu Zhi made use of the Neo-Confucian concept of self-realization to explain the five pillars of Islam. It is based on this work that many scholars argue that Liu Zhi adapted or inculturated Islam into Chinese culture.
- 6.0 In general, Liu Zhi was influenced by his Chinese Sufi tradition. He contextualized the Sufi spirituality of seekers as the way of return to the Real Ruler by using Neo-Confucian or other Chinese religious spirituality. This is clearly demonstrated by his poem, *The Five Sessions of the Moon* and can also be seen in other work, in particular *The Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

7. 4 The Contemporary Relevance: Muslims as Minorities

Liu Zhi translated and applied the Islamic texts which Muslim literati had received into their respective Chinese contexts. Liu Zhi had a daunting task because he argued that one could be both a Muslim and a Chinese under an increasingly oppressive Qing imperial rule. To do so, Liu Zhi endeavoured to continue interpreting the received Ibn ‘Arabi tradition within his own context in Chinese. On the one hand, he distinguished Islam from the Chinese culture by stating Islam belonged to the wisdom of the Arab world, founded by a western sage, Muhammad who received direct revelation from God. Thus, he separated Islam as a religion from Chinese social culture. On the other hand, he argued that Islamic rites and Chinese socio-religious culture were compatible and they would exist harmoniously.⁶²⁷

Liu Zhi’s contextualization resonates with the contemporary Islamic scholar, Tariq Ramadan. Ramadan’s works focus on Islamic theology and the position of the Muslim in the West and within Muslim minority countries.⁶²⁸ Ramadan calls himself both a Muslim and a Swiss. He affirms that there is a difference in nature between the Islamic principles related to religious ritual and those that concern the affairs of the world and society.⁶²⁹ In the realm of religious rituals, detailed and precise instructions are laid down in the Qur’an and *Hadith*. In the realm of human affairs in the West, Qur’an and *Hadith* generally only give guidance and direction rather than a definitive framework.⁶³⁰ According to Ramadan, the methodologies in these two realms are complete opposites. While ritual practice only relies on the Qur’an and *Hadith*, human affairs involve human reason and also allow creativity of interpretation. Ramadan asserts that in social human affairs, Islamic laws are

⁶²⁷ Any conflict between Islamic and traditional Neo-Confucian teachings is due to deviations and cults within Neo-Confucianism. Liu, *Nature and Principle in Islam*, 32-33.

⁶²⁸ Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁶²⁹ Ramadan notes that while the scholastic traditionalism of Islam pays attention to the revealed texts to elucidate Islamic principles, liberal reformism emphasizes reason as a means to work out the affairs of the world and society. For Ramadan, Sufism is more inclined towards the text than reason. Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 29.

⁶³⁰ See also Kemal Ataman, ‘Religion, Culture and the Shaping of Religious Attitudes: The Case of Islam,’ *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18 (2007) 495-508, citing 504.

interactive with reason. Also Islamic laws are interactive with the social context. Ramadan insists that reason should not be the sole responsibility of *ulama*. This reason is known as civil reason by a corporate body consisting of experts, social and natural scientists, intellectuals and ordinary citizens.

As explicated by Andy Yu in his research, Ramadan puts civil reason at the centre of an interactive triangle.⁶³¹ It is the civil reason at the centre that can be interactive with three other points, influencing and being influenced by them.⁶³² The first triangular point is represented by the Qur'an and *Hadith*. Reasoning by such a civil corporate body should be based firmly in the explicit and implicit teachings of the Qur'an and *Hadith*. The second point in the triangle is the context of the society. The corporate body analyzes the social context by reasoning and then reflects upon the analysis after their experience. The third point is the need for critique. The corporate people analyze their critique and likewise reflect upon their criticisms. Ramadan argues that this ongoing reasoning, critique and reflection upon the social context in the light of the Qur'an and *Hadith* are necessary in both western pluralistic and Muslim majority societies.

Similarly, Kemal Ataman also notes that the attitude of Muslims towards people of other religious traditions cannot be characterized as a definite, fixed doctrine in any given time and space in any multicultural society.⁶³³ As one's context changes, so does the interpretation of the text that shapes one's consciousness, and therefore one's attitudes. Along similar lines of approach as Ramadan and Ataman, Hendrik M. Vroom opines that Muslim immigrants from Middle Eastern countries now living in Western Europe with a change in context need a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of Islam in their

⁶³¹ Andy Yu, 'A Framework of Positioning Islam in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of the Thought of Tariq Ramadan,' in Lau Yee-cheung and Li Lin (eds), *Confluence of Civilizations: Prospect of Dialogue between Christianity and Islam* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2012) 74-75.

⁶³² Ramadan interprets *shari'a* broadly incorporating the role of reason or thinking. It shows Muslims how to be and remain Muslim. The *shari'a* is not only the expression of the universal principles of Islam but the framework and thinking that makes for their actualization in human history. Ramadan, *Western Muslims*, 32.

⁶³³ Ataman, 'Religion, Culture,' 495.

transition to a Western culture. Such a process involves reinterpretation in a different context of the principles of *fiqh* and the right understanding of the Qur'an and *Hadith*.⁶³⁴

Thus, Ramadan and others resonate with Liu Zhi's translation-conversation method of contextualization, in particular the realm of human affairs in the West where Muslims live as ethnic minorities. We conclude that Liu Zhi's model of translation-conversation contextualization with emphasis on triangulation between text translation, cultural adaptation and spiritual wisdom has relevance and may enlighten further understanding of Muslims in the West. That is, while Liu Zhi worked in 17th-18th century China, his ideas still have currency and current relevance.

In post 9/11 America, some American Muslims have made attempts to reclaim or re-state the true nature of their faith. Khaled Abou El Fadl laments that political discourses have displaced moral discourses.⁶³⁵ In fact, Islam is concerned with building and creating life and thus is against violence. Furthermore, Taha Jabir Alalwani asserts that Islam summons Muslims to build a civilization, a community, with values, not a state.⁶³⁶ A Sufi poet, Kabir Helminski says that 'Islam is not a formulation, an ethical system, a practice, or even a revelation as much as it is a revelation to the divine.'⁶³⁷ Islam is a lifestyle that reflects tolerance and gentleness. Muslims should live in peaceful coexistence in a state of equality. These recent re-statements of faith by some American Muslims emphasize the experience of God and peaceful coexistence with other human beings. These teachings resonate with Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

⁶³⁴ Hendrik M. Vroom, 'Islam's Adaptation to the West: on the Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Religion,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60 (2007) 226.

⁶³⁵ Khaled Abou El Fadl, 'Peaceful Jihad' in M. Wolfe (ed.), *Taking Back Islam* (Emmaus: Rodale Press, 2002) 35-36.

⁶³⁶ Radwan A. Masmoudi, 'No More Simplistic Answers' in M. Wolfe (ed.), *Taking Back Islam* (Emmaus: Rodale Press, 2002) 83.

⁶³⁷ Kabir Helminski, 'Islam: a Broad Perspective on Other Faiths' in M. Wolfe (ed.), *Taking Back Islam* (Emmaus: Rodale Press, 2002) 153.

7.5 The Legacy of Liu Zhi in 20th-Century China

The legacy of Liu Zhi lasted into the mid 20th-century China in Xi Dao Tang (西道堂) in Ningxia, China. The founder and leader of this group of Muslims was Ma Qixi who started the group in 1890. He adopted Liu Zhi's written works as his main sources of Islamic education and teaching. Ma was not a scholar but his poems on Islam were popular among his followers. A common understanding is that Liu Zhi is the seed and Xi Dao Tang is the fruit.⁶³⁸ Jin Yijiu explains that the key point of this understanding is that Xi Dao Tang persistently used Chinese cultural ideas to explain and expound Islam.⁶³⁹ Not only did Xi Dao Tang adopt and embrace Chinese cultures to explain their beliefs, but also the Muslims of Xi Dao Tang used extensive networks of trade to engage and make friends with their neighbours, both Hans and non-Hans in 19th-20th century China. Ma followed Liu Zhi's teaching of harmonious co-existence between the minority Muslims and the majority Hans. Xi Dao Tang declined during the Second World War due to internal conflicts and other reasons. The co-existence between Muslims as ethnic minorities and other groups in that region of Ningxia, North China did not create any cultural, political and religious animosity.

Muslims have been living in China for many centuries and there have been occasional rebellious uprisings and various governments have responded mercilessly. However, generally speaking, Muslims have co-existed with Han Chinese harmoniously for centuries. Contextualization and contextual theology are necessary for any Muslims living as ethnic minorities in the modern world. The contextualization of Liu Zhi is relevant in that the basic tenets of Islam can remain unchanged. The way forward for Islam in the modern world is to acknowledge the need for reform by contextualization into local culture.

⁶³⁸ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 339.

⁶³⁹ Jin, *Chinese Islam*, 330.

7. 6 Final Conclusion

This study was concerned with the issue of Liu Zhi's contextualization of Islam in 17th-18th century China. The general consensus of most Chinese scholars is that Liu Zhi's Islam is Confucianized, but most English scholars aver that Confucianism in Liu Zhi's works is just a means and not an end. Chapter One explained the research questions and provided the methodological introduction. Various models of contextualization were explicated. Not only did Liu Zhi and other Muslim literati translate Islamic texts in Persian and Arabic into Chinese, they also interpreted Islamic concepts by primarily using Confucian terms. Liu Zhi's contextualization involved active engagement, dialogue and conversation with the Chinese contexts.

Chapter Two gave an account of the historical, religious and philosophical contexts of Liu Zhi. The Three Teachings in China provided rich resources of philosophical and ethical materials for Liu Zhi to contextualize the Islamic message of divine being, rites, return to the Real and others. Chapter Three examined almost all extant works of Liu Zhi and discussed the contemporary scholarship on Liu Zhi's works. Little study has been made by scholars, both English and Chinese, on the role of the Prophet Muhammad in Liu Zhi's overall teaching. Liu Zhi contextualized Muhammad as the Utmost Sage of Islam, superior to any Chinese sage.

Chapter Four showed that unlike Jami, but in continuity with Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi taught the concept of existence in terms of the three Ones, namely, the Real One, the Numerical One and the Embodied One. Unlike both Jami and Wang, Liu Zhi put greater emphasis on the role of the heart in the practical aspect of the unity of existence. The goal of Liu Zhi's contextualization is to help his readers to understand the difficult philosophical concept of the unity of existence and to help them set their hearts on return to the Real.

In Chapter Five, while Liu Zhi used plentiful Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian terms and images in his poem of *The Five Sessions of the Moon*, the overall structure and themes

complied with Sufi thoughts. His depiction of the Prophet of Muhammad in the early part of *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* was of a unique and extraordinary person with existence in both the innate and the acquired heaven. Liu Zhi contextualized Muhammad as the Utmost Sage who had a unique nature of continuity. Without Muhammad's nature, Sufi seekers could not actualize their full realization and return to the Real. Clearly, heaven, nature and sagehood are common Confucian terms. Thus, Liu Zhi is a skillful cultural agent who contextualizes his Islamic message in active engagement, dialogue and conversation with his Chinese cultural contexts.

Chapter Six focused on only the first five chapters of Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*. Liu Zhi explicitly stated that he used Confucian terms to help his explanation, especially for those readers who might know the meaning and reason of the Islamic rites and yet still have doubts. While Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* has been claimed to be Confucianized, we conclude that only when Liu Zhi explained the way of humanity, did he identify the Islamic ethical relationships with Neo-Confucianism. When Liu Zhi explained the way of heaven in terms of the five endeavours of Islam, the Islamic concepts had distinctive meanings and the role of the Prophet Muhammad was vitally important for any seeker of Islam to return to the Real.

After examining the major and minor works of Liu Zhi, this study concludes that Liu Zhi's Islam is in accordance with the Ibn 'Arabi tradition. Sufi ideas permeate all his works. Liu Zhi consistently contextualized his Islam into the Chinese contexts by using the translation-conversation model.

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GLOSSARY OF CHINESE WORDS

A

act, action 行

Aershi 阿而實

Ahong 阿訇

alteration 變

annihilation (*fana'*)

apertures, bodily 體竅

ascent 升

awareness 覺

B

Being (*wujud*) 存在, 存有

body 體

breath (*nafas*) 息

C

carrier, three 三乘

Changes, Book of 易經

clarity 明

classic 經

constant, five 五常

continuity, nature of 繼性

cultivation 修

D

Dao 道

Daoism 道教

Daodejing 道德經

designation 稱

differentiation 分

discernment 識

dust 塵

E

embodiment 體

emptiness 空

endeavours, five 五功

F

fa 法

faithfulness 信

feeling 情

fire 火

firmness 定

flow 流

form (*xing*) 形

L

loyalty 忠

N

nature (*xing*) 性

Neo-Confucianism 新儒家

Neo-Confucian literati 新儒士

Non Ultimate 無極

O

One, Embodied 體一

One, Numerical 數一

One, Real 真一

P

piety, filial 孝

principle 理

R

righteousness 義

ritual, rites 禮

Root suchness 本然

S

Self-cultivation 修身

V

virtue 德

vital-energy (*qi*) 氣

W

worthies (*xian*) 賢

Y

yin, and yang 陰陽

Z

Zhu Zhi 朱子

Appendix I:

The Poem of the Five Sessions of the Moon¹ in English and Chinese

<p>In the beginning of the first session, the moon begins to appear. Comprehend the Real Ruler that has no form or image. Its subtlety is not known and non-designated. It has no boundary and exists as the real reality.² It is unique without beginning and end; the Supreme Honoured without any partner. Creative transformation begins. Principle and image are completed. The great mandate is installed and it opens door to various subtleties.</p>	<p>一更初，月正生，參悟真宰無影形。 妙難喻，無所稱。不落方所乃實真。 永活亙古無終始，獨一無偶唯至尊， 開造化，理象成，大命立開眾妙門。</p>
<p>In the mid first session, the moon is new. There is a need to understand the intelligent Non-Ultimate as the root of nature and principle. The vital energy opens up. The <i>yin-yang</i> dissociates. When all the things are complete, the Human Ultimate³ is begotten. The Non-Ultimate is the seed while the Great Ultimate is the tree.⁴ The tree was once in the fruit which later gives rise to the root. There is a need to understand and distinguish the tree from fruit.⁵ Avoid confusing the root with the one who plants the root.</p>	<p>一更中，月正新，參慧無極性理根。 元氣剖，陰陽分，萬物全備人極生。 無極是種太極樹，樹藏果內果即根。 慎分明，須認真，莫把種作種根人。</p>

¹ The text follows the one published by Yin. See Yin, *Chinese Islam*, 323-24. The text and brief comments are also available on the internet. See 'Re-reading of the Five Sessions of Moon,' 2 *Muslim web site* (March 2014, <http://www.2muslim.com/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=147930>).

² The great transformation in the beginning session of the moon follows closely the initial stage of the great transformation of the Real in the first chapter of Liu Zhi's *Nature and Principle of Islam*. It is also in continuation with Wang Daiyu's concept of great transformation.

³ The Human Ultimate is Liu Zhi's term for the perfect man of the Ibn 'Arabi's tradition.

⁴ Non-Ultimate, Great Ultimate and Yin-Yang are often used Neo-Confucian cosmological terms. The three key movers in this great transformation are Non-Ultimate, Great Ultimate and Human Ultimate.

⁵ Liu Zhi used familiar Sufi analogy, namely the root, tree and fruit.

<p>At the end of first session, the moon is up high. There is a need to have firm belief in our teaching and reject other devious teachings. Seek endeavour in the acquired heaven, desire for forgiveness. Obey the heavenly mandate and holy rules. Obedience shall enjoy unlimited blessings in paradise. Disobedience leads to punishment in hell. I beseech your, dear children, waste no time in happy excursion. Otherwise, the afterlife will be in crying torment.</p>	<p>一更末，月正高，定信吾教異諸教。 修後世，望恕饒，遵行天命與聖條。 順享天堂無限福，逆罰地獄受刑牢 勸童稚，莫逍遙，免得死後哭嚎啕。</p>
<p>In the beginning of the second session, the moon is charming. This life on earth cannot give security to our mandate. Indulging in a glamorous life will reap all day labour and result in bitter torment in this suffering world. A hundred years have 36,000 days and humans rarely live over seventy years of age. I beseech you, dear children, think carefully. In a sudden moment, unexpected events may happen.</p>	<p>二更初，月正嬌，人生世上命不牢。 貪榮華，終日勞，身入苦海受煎熬。 百年三萬六千日，人生七十古來少。 勸童稚，細推敲，瞥眼一時無常到。</p>
<p>In the mid second session, the moon is round. Discipline your life and don't take a laid back life. Drink and eat less. Keep to your sleep. Always remember in your heart the <i>Shahadah</i>.⁶ Hands should not let go the precious bronze green sword. Break away from indulgent love and abandon absurd relationships. From now on, strive forward step by step. Land onto the shore of <i>dao</i> and see the real</p>	<p>二更中，月正圓，呼吸二氣莫放閑。 減飲食，聊睡眠，常把真言記心間。 青銅寶劍休離手，斬斷恩愛除妄緣。 從此間，步步前，得登道岸見真元。</p>

⁶ Esoteric Sufi practices are rare in this poem. This is the only place where *dhikr* is mentioned with emphasis that such prayer is from the heart.

<p>vital-energy.</p> <p>At the end of the second session, the moon is shining. When the heart is in danger, the <i>dao</i> is dim and weak in the heart. Monkey and horse are abominable. Dragon and tiger are threatening. Behind station after station stand tall and imposing mountain ranges.⁷ Even though you have the green sword⁸, you cannot cut open a way out into freedom. So, visit the spiritual master and seek to defend your <i>dao</i>.⁹ Through the mysterious station,¹⁰ then acquire real opportunity.</p> <p>In the beginning of the third session, the moon is pure.¹¹ Seek the great <i>dao</i> from within yourself. While the cosmos is huge and things are difficult to name them, the <i>dao</i> has left its traits inside your heart.¹² The <i>dao</i> encloses the heaven and earth and yet humanity encloses the <i>dao</i>.¹³ The <i>dao</i> penetrates both outside and inside; both coarse and fine. Learn</p>	<p>二更末・月正輝，人心唯危道心微。 轅馬劣，龍虎威，關口重疊山崔巍。 雖有青鋒難敵鬥，怎能砍開出重圍。 訪名師，求護衛・透過玄關得真機。</p> <p>三更初，月正清，大道不離本身尋。 乾坤大，物難名，盡向微軀方寸臨。 道包天地人包道，貫徹表裡與粗精。 知的確，好登程，認己明時認主明。</p>
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⁷ The Sufi path with station after station is clearly a confirmation of Liu Zhi's Sufi thought.

⁸ The bronze sword was known as a very sharp weapon in the Qin dynasty. Later, it was superseded by an iron sword.

⁹ Liu Zhi clearly emphasized the Sufi master and seeker relationship. Again, this is one of the Sufi practices and only the seekers with the guidance and direction of the master can make further progress.

¹⁰ The word 'mysterious' has Daoist connotations. It means not so much 'mystical' but rather 'difficult to comprehend'.

¹¹ The third session takes up many Sufi themes but they are expressed eclectically.

¹² Liu Zhi affirmed and argued rationally that the Lord has left many traits in the world. These traits may derive from the smallest details of humanity. The *dao* is ubiquitous and all embracing even within humans.

¹³ From the perspective of the world of images, the cosmos is huge and humanity is merely one of many creatures. From the perspective of the heart or spiritual world, the human heart can embrace the cosmos and is embraced by the *dao*.

<p>this well and start your journey. When you understand yourself better, you also know the Lord.¹⁴</p>	
<p>In the mid third session, the moon is moving. A treasure pearl hides on the seabed. Stride quickly for the journey and set sail for the sea. The turbulent waves keep coming as if you are being sucked into a dragon's den. You are tormented by limitless sufferings. Yet, the reward is to reap the priceless treasure pearl. Be alert and stand firm to defend. Don't fool around. For wealth and honour, seek to return back to the home country.¹⁵</p>	<p>三更中，月正朗。一顆明珠海底藏。 忙登程，駕輕航，翻入龍窩層層浪。 受盡千般無限苦，撈得明珠無價償。 謹護持，莫放蕩，富貴好回原家鄉。</p>
<p>At the end of the third session, the moon is high up. Be single minded and look forward to seeing the paradise in the jade garden.¹⁶ Ascend to the heaven of Immortals and complete the jade ring. Be guided by the light of the Little Immortal and join the banquet. Pick some medicines and make some life-saving precious tables.¹⁷ Meet the sick and give him the tablet for free. Heal the old and afflicted. Then, receive the reward of a long-lived life.</p>	<p>三更末，月正端，一心要從玉院看。 登九霄，叩玉環，仙童把盞赴宴歡 采得幾般靈妙藥，製成濟世妙金丹。 遇病夫，贈一丸，醫得疲癯壽南山。</p>
<p>At the beginning of the fourth session, the moon is slanting. The legendary moon lady resides in the jade</p>	<p>四更初，月正偏，嫦娥梳妝玉樓前。</p>

¹⁴ Understanding oneself means also understanding the Lord. This theme is also explicit in the first introductory chapter of *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*.

¹⁵ This is the central and key section of the poem. Many characteristics of Sufi thought about seeking the *dao* and acquiring the wisdom of God are discussed. Seekers must be diligent and persistent in their pursuit of the Sufi path.

¹⁶ Literally, the words refer to the jade garden. It is paraphrased as paradise.

¹⁷ In Liu Zhi's *Rules and Proprieties of Islam*, he asserted that the five endeavours could have wonderful healing effects on human sickness and spiritual wholeness. The making of medicines and tables is a Daoist concern for good health and longevity.

<p>residence. She puts on her make up in front of the dressing table.¹⁸ Her body is tenderly soft, her face with made-up powders. She moves softly and tenderly like a heavenly angel. Humankind was created from dust and yet possesses the spirit. Banish humankind into the world and humans have marriages. Man and woman enjoy. The yin and yang join together. Their intimate care and love last for thousands of years.</p>	<p>體似酥，麵粉團，蹁躚嫋娜賽天仙。 抖擻精神凝魂魄，謫下凡塵配姻緣。 男女歡，陰陽聯，相親相愛無限年。</p>
<p>In the mid fourth session, the moon is towards the west. How can turbid substance return to the Real One? The method is refinement by the purifying furnace and burning by fire. This should do away with all the outer cosmetics. Then, collect the real sap after the purification. Endeavours need to be repeated hundreds and thousands of times.¹⁹ This will produce the valuable tripod and golden tub. When the Lord calls, don't disobey. Your whole self needs to return to the Real and ascend to the Great Void.²⁰</p>	<p>四更中，月正西，濁體怎能歸真一？ 爐裡鍛，火中燒，銷盡鉛華存精汁。 不經千錘百煉功，怎能寶鼎金甌匹。 主命喚，莫敢違，全體歸真上太虛。</p>
<p>At the end of the fourth session, the moon is full. Practise self-control, resume proprieties and then</p>	<p>四更末，月正盈，克己復禮至性存。 踐三乘，過五行，成全四藏是真人。</p>

¹⁸ The mythical lady is a popular figure in a Chinese ancient folk story. This beautiful lady lives on the planet moon. The use of this lady in this poem may have two meanings. Firstly, she refers to the wife of Adam. Secondly, she refers to the virtue and beauty of human spirituality. The possession of spiritual aspects in humanity beautifies the outlook of humankind.

¹⁹ The path of return is by extreme hard and disciplined work.

²⁰ Literally, it means the 'great emptiness'.

<p>retain the nature. Practise three vehicles, pass through five elements²¹ and accomplish the path to become the real “I”²²; thus becoming real humanity. Inherently, I own the inner precious mirror.²³ I rank supreme among all in the creation. Steer forward the merciful sea journey and guide the lost. Then, reside with a sincere and compassionate heart.</p>	<p>昆侖寶鏡原屬我，萬物之中我為尊。 掌慈航，渡迷人，便寓真誠惻隱心。</p>
<p>In the beginning of the fifth session, the moon is shrinking. The heart embraces both the heaven and earth. The heaven folds up and the earth cleaves. The images of creation may decay but the principle is not to disappear.²⁴ Obstruction is overcome and nondissociation begins. The two worlds of colour and subtlety become transparent. It is difficult to communicate subtle sayings to ordinary people because it seems like a mouth that has no tongue.</p>	<p>五更初，月正缺，胸藏一壺真日月。 天已卷，地已裂，萬物相朽理弗滅。 一障一消真容現，色妙二世俱透徹。 雖有口，卻無舌，難與凡人說妙訣。</p>
<p>In the mid fifth session, the moon is submerged. The pure heart manifests the nature and the <i>dao</i> is complete. When the ascent and descent unite, the circling is complete. Then, it completes the return to root suchness. Humanity and heaven unite. Images</p>	<p>五更中，月正淹，清心顯性道大全。 升降合，迴圈完，一歸本然渾人天。 更超明象真諦現，三忘盡時本然燦。 形體化，兩孤圓，盡終返始歸自然。</p>

²¹ The concept of elements is based on Razi’s Sufi path. These are foundational elements for the creation of the material world. The five elements refer to gold, wood, water, fire and earth. Passing through the five element means that the seeker is getting out of the realm of the material world and into the realm of transcendence.

²² Literally, accomplishing the path has four hidden aspects. These aspects may refer to the enlightenment of the heart, the realization of the nature, the transcendence of the material world and finally union with the Real. At the end of the path, the seeker can acquire the realm of the ‘real’ person.

²³ This is an analogy. The Real is the real existence and humankind is the mirror which reflects the Real. It is because humankind can reflect the Real that humankind ranks supreme in creation.

²⁴ The description is clearly of the final day of judgment. Although all the visible things are to be destroyed, the principle (*li*) of all things remains unchanged.

<p>are transcended and the real essence of meaning manifests. At the end of three self-denials,²⁵ the root suchness shines. The invisible and visible disintegrate. The two arcs form a circle and eventually return to the original suchness.²⁶</p> <p>At the end of the fifth session, the moon is waning. Return to the Real and reach to the highest heaven.²⁷ There is neither colour nor image, neither sound nor smell, only real quietude. A dust or grain may be small but its smallness embraces the greatness of the total substance. All things in the creation return to the origin and are no longer in time and space. The fruit is a union with the Real without any world of image. The afterlife is happiness and solitude.</p>	<p>五更末，月正落，覆命歸真上大羅。 無色府，無相所，無聲無臭真寂寞。 一塵一粟全體大，一呼一息終古多。 渾世象，全種果，依然最初獨自樂！</p>
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²⁵ The three denials refer to the denial of self, others and all visible things.

²⁶ This is in accordance with the Ibn ‘Arabi tradition.

²⁷ The highest heaven 大羅 is a Daoist concept. This shows Liu Zhi’s extensive eclecticism.

Appendix II:

Translation of Selected Texts of the *True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam*¹

Introductory Chapter: Explanation of the Honour and Nobility of Muhammad (an Overview from Various Classics)²	卷之首:至聖解 (群經集覽)
<p>Humankind is honourable in heaven and earth. Among humankind, there are sages, worthies, wise and foolish. The sages are most honourable. Among sages, they are further classified into ordinary, ambassador, great and utmost. The Utmost Sage is the highest. Muhammad is the highest sage of all time and of all places and is called the Utmost Sage.</p>	天地間人為貴。人有聖，賢，知，愚，聖為尤貴。聖復有列聖，欽聖，大聖，至聖，至聖為至貴。穆罕默德貴為天下古今之一聖人也，故稱至聖。
<p>At the beginning of creative transformation, humanity is classed by the principle (<i>li</i>) into nine groups. The Utmost Sage is the highest. After taking the form, humans take on nine groups of image. The image of the Utmost Sage is perfect. His principle is perfect.</p>	造化之初，人分九品之理，而至聖之理居最上。賦形而後，人有九品之象，而至聖之象為最上。理之最上者佑無不全，象之最上者能無不備。
<p>The principle and image of all things are to be found within the compass of the nine heavens and the seven earths. The heavens are superior to the earths and the Aershi surpasses the heavens. The nature and principle of the Utmost Sage were situated at the Aershi. Therefore, he is the most honourable than any in all the heavens and the earths.</p>	九天七地，為萬有理象之居位。天貴於地，阿而實又貴於天。至聖之性理位於阿而實，則其居位為天地之至貴。
<p>The ancestors of the Utmost Sage, going right back to</p>	至聖祖先直溯至初祖阿丹，絕

¹ Liu, Zhi 劉智, *The True Record of the Utmost Sage of Islam* 天方至聖實錄 (Beijing, China Islamic Association, 1984).

² Liu Zhi, *True Record*, 23-25.

Adam, never worshipped idols or prayed to heathen gods. This virtue of the ancestors nourished and cultivated generation after generation, culminating in the Utmost Sage. He is the most honourable in accumulated virtue.	無拜佛祈神者，絕無污行者，由其祖德世世培植而有至聖，其積厚之至貴也。
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Introductory Chapter: the Utmost Sage³	卷之首：至聖篇
<p>From the time of the ancients, there have been many sages. Muhammad is the Utmost Sage. It is so called because he has all required virtues. His transformation is thorough. Through his whole body, the Real Ruler emanates to become the great function... the Spirit of the Utmost Sage existed before the heaven and the earth. He is the fruit of all sages. While the heaven and earth are big, they are nurtured by the Utmost Sage. The spirits of ten thousand sages are under his shadow and they have life from him. Although he is the descendent of Adam with respect to form, his spirit is really before Adam. His teaching embraces ten thousand teachings. His rule collects and completes ten thousand rules. His way excels ten thousand ways and is upright, illuminates like the sun and moon, as long-lasting as the heaven and earth. ... With regard to his teaching, it has been attested by all later generations to be enduring. Its principle (<i>li</i> 理) is clear; meaning is articulate; literary artistry is excellent and above beautiful literature. These prove that the Lord reveals the sacred texts. Those who are obedient to the teaching, they are not tempted away by any riches and fame. Their ways are not blocked</p>	<p>千古以來為聖者多矣，而惟穆罕默德為至聖。至聖者，德無不備。化無不通，全體真宰而流為大用者也...至聖之靈，卓出於天地未有之先，為萬世聖人之果。是故天地之大，莫胥其孕育而成有；萬聖之靈，莫不稟其陰應而得生。是故其形為阿丹嗣，其靈為阿丹祖，其教統萬教而皆備，其法集萬法而觀成，其道卓越萬道而中正，與日月同光，與天壤同久 ... 至其教化之垂久而為天下後世據者 ... 其理明，其義深，其文詞高出天下而無與比，是則主授之經可據也。服教之人，功名富貴不能惑其志 ... 無往不通，是則服教之人可據也。</p>

³ Liu Zhi, *True Record*, 41-43.

and this truth is proved by all who obey the way.	
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<p>Chapter One: The Record of the Transmission of the Light of Muhammad through Successive Generations of his Ancestors⁴</p> <p>The Utmost Sage was established before the heaven and earth and began the transformation of all things. His designation then was named Ahmad. He was the progenitor of all creation. When he was born in the acquired heaven and earth as the seal of the all sages, he was named Muhammad.</p> <p>The original form of an ordinary man is contained in the backbone of his ancestor. However, the Utmost Sage's original form was seen in the forehead of his ancestors. As the head is the noblest part of the body, and the forehead is the most honourable part of the head, we thus can see that the place from which the Utmost Sage received his form was the most honourable.</p> <p>The original form of the Utmost Sage was manifested on the forehead of Adam. His original principle was situated at the highest part of the ninth heaven; his exalted name was found in the foremost part of the <i>Aershi</i>; how could he be any other than the most honourable one?⁵</p>	<p>卷之首: 至聖源流歷代傳光記</p> <p>至聖也者, 先天地立. 開萬化之宗. 額合默帝其稱. 後天地生. 封眾聖之印. 穆罕默德其名.</p> <p>世人之元形皆涵於祖, 父之脊背, 獨至聖之元形見於父, 祖之面額. 夫首為一身之尊, 額為一尊之尊, 則其賦形處至貴也.</p> <p>至聖之元形見於阿丹之額, 至聖之元理位於九天之額, 至聖之尊名列於阿而實 [寶座]之額, 何莫非至貴者耶?</p>
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⁴ Liu Zhi, *True Record*, 46-47.

⁵ Murata avers that *Aershi* derives from the Arabic '*arsh*' which means the throne of God in Qur'an 20:5. Murata argues that Liu Zhi understood *Aershi* as the nature of the Utmost Sage. Alternatively, the term *Aershi* means the Ascribed Spirit breathed into Adam, the Mandate. In the case of Razi in his *Path*, God began the process of creation by firstly creating the Muhammadan Spirit. Murata, *The Sage*, 58-59.

<p>The sages are as numerous as the stars but the Utmost Sage is the sun among the stars. The tradition of teaching is like the baking of a cake. The former sages planted the wheat and made the flour and mixed it appropriately. The Utmost Sage completed the process of baking the cake. The Utmost Sage was the most cherished person of the whole creation. That is why the Lord said to Jesus, ‘had it not been for Muhammad, I would not have created heaven, earth, men and spirits.’ So there can be no doubt that the Utmost Sage had a special existence.</p> <p>The roof of heaven bore his name. The gate of heaven was inscribed with his name on its door. The ancient books recorded his name. Angels and devils extolled it. The Utmost Sage’s own body bore the stamp of his name. The heaven and earth and all things were created in accordance with his name. Who or what in heaven or on earth can surpass the Utmost Sage? Everything returns to him like all streams return to the sea. Those who return to him are the upright and those who do not return to him are the deceived people. Who can be compared to him?</p>	<p>聖賢如眾星。至聖則日。教化如炊餅。前聖種麥造麵和劑。至聖則成熟餅也。至聖乃造化鍾意之人。是故主諭爾撒曰：不為穆罕默德不造天地人神。則其特生也無疑。</p> <p>天頂額其名，天門書其名，古典載其名，神鬼頌其名。欣都貝葉撰其名。至聖本聖印其名。天地萬物象其名而造。人身象其名而生。天上地下，孰有至聖而為物者。猶眾流之歸海也。是故歸之者為正。不歸之者為迷。貴孰如也。</p>
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<p>Chapter Two: Diagram of Transformation⁶</p> <p>Transformation begins in the innate heaven, initiated by the great mandate. The great mandate is the act of</p>	<p>卷之二：化統造化循環圖</p> <p>化統始於先天，起於大命。大</p>
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⁶ Liu Zhi, *True Record*, 68-69.

<p>all true principle (<i>li</i> 理). From the great mandate, there is the nature of continuity which is the root suchness of the Utmost Sage.⁷ All other natures of the sages derive from him, including the nature of worthies. From the nature of worthies, all other natures like ignorant ... from the sage to the Utmost Sage, this return back to the root suchness of the nature of continuity. This is called exhausting the nature and principle and getting to the mandate. This is known as the descent and ascent of the great transformation. Likewise, this is also the way of humanity in the descent and ascent. Since the beginning of humankind, only the person Muhammad can achieve the ascent. He embraces the whole transformation from the beginning to the end. Thus, all return can benefit with Muhammad as the goal of return.⁸</p>	<p>命者, 真理之流行也。自大命而有繼性。繼性者, 至聖之本然也。由繼性而有一切聖性, 由聖性而有一切賢學知愚性 ... 聖而至於至聖, 則復乎其本然之繼性, 所謂 '窮理盡性以至於命' 也。此也謂大化流行循環之統序, 此之謂人道遵循升降之始終。生民以來, 能至其位者惟穆罕默德一人而已。穆罕默德, 其包貫造化之始終者也, 故萬化咸以穆罕默德為依歸。</p>
<p>The Utmost Sage: the Integration of Great Transformation</p> <p>Why is Muhammad called the Utmost Sage? How could the Utmost Sage include the great transformation? The great transformation stops at the Utmost Sage but this is not the end. The Utmost Sage continues the transformation to its completion. All individual transformation has its own aspect and is one-sided but the Utmost Sage's transformation</p>	<p>至聖, 集大成</p> <p>何稱 '至聖' ? 何稱 '集大成' 哉? 大化流行, 至聖而止, 非絕也, 聖即化也, 即化之全體也。萬化各顯其偏, 至聖獨顯其全, 故能繼承真宰而成大化, 復道萬化而歸真宰。自天之人, 自人之天, 為成化, 化</p>

⁷ Root suchness (*ren*) is a fundamental concept of Liu Zhi. Root suchness can be paraphrased as 'without beginning and already in existence'. Murata uses the literal word 'suchness' and parallels it with the Arabic word *inniyya*, that-it-is-ness. 'In Islamic philosophy, *inniyya* is used as a synonym for existence (*wujud*). Murata further explicates root suchness as root substance which is the Real Being. Murata, *Sage*, 184.

⁸ This paragraph is a clear and concise summary of Liu Zhi's cosmogony in Confucian terms with emphasis on the important role of the prophet Muhammad.

covers all aspects. Thus, he continues the work of the Real Ruler in the great transformation. He returns the transformation to the Real Lord. He is the man from heaven and from the earth to heaven. He becomes the axis of transformation. Anyone who is not led by the sage's transformation, he will go astray and deviate from the way. He is lost from the real way. ⁹	化之機軸也。不由聖人之化而別尋進者，則是異端迷途，正真道也。
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Chapter Seven: First Messenger to China¹⁰	送使人中國
In the first year of the Prophetship of Muhammad, there was seen in the sky a strange star, the Chinese emperor Su Wen Ti commanded his astronomer to tell him the meaning. He said, 'there would be an extraordinary person appearing in the West.' The emperor sent an envoy to investigate...	為聖元年，天見異星，赤尼帝隋文帝命大史占之，曰：“西域當有異人出。”帝命使西來驗其實...
The prophet sent his uncle Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas and three others to go with the envoy to China...	聖使賽爾德（聖舅）等四人偕使入赤尼...
The emperor Wen Ti hung up the portrait of the prophet and worshipped it, and when he arose, the scroll was there but the picture had vanished... The disappearance of the picture was due to the wonderful influence of the prophet. The emperor, alarmed, said, "It must really be that he is the Pure Emperor and the True King". ¹¹	“隋文帝看見穆聖的畫像，帝掛像欲拜之， 帝愕然，曰：“莫非白帝真君乎？”
The account of the entry of religion ... is given in	

⁹ The key role of the prophet Muhammad is mediating between humanity and the Real Ruler.

¹⁰ Liu Zhi, *True Record*, 120.

¹¹ Mason, *Arabian Prophet*, 94. In Mason's translated work, this story is placed in the fifth chapter.

detail in several Chinese histories, so it can be proved. The story of worshipping of the portrait is not recorded in the histories; but it has been handed down by tradition, and may be seen recorded on stone tablets, so must not be rejected. ¹²	聖教來東，中史載之詳矣。“隋書”，“殊域周咨錄”，“人代紀要”，“通鑒綱目”，“世史類編”緒書據也，而拜像一事不載。第父老相傳，碑記可考，不可泯也。
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The Learning ¹³	學問
<p>Knowledge refers to the knowledge of the Real Ruler. One who seeks is not ignorant and a seeker begins to learn. Seeking is indeed the beginning of learning. It is not shameful for a seeker to ask questions and a teacher should not withhold answers. It says, ‘regardless of age or social class, anyone who can give benefit to learning is my teacher.’ Day and night, ask the Lord to give you beneficial learning and avoid unhealthy habits. One rule of caution for the learner says, ‘if one is close to learners, then one learns. If one works with greedy people, one is lost. Do not take in any unhealthy learning.’ Befriend literati and honourable people. Do not let selfish desire blind you. Do not be poisoned by heresy.</p> <p>The myriad things are established in sincerity. Make your heart steady, your will upright. Then, things turn out pleasantly. It says, ‘teaching is to clarify the</p>	<p>以真主之知為知。無不知而以求習為學，此學問之所由來也。不恥問，不吝教。曰：‘無長幼，無貴賤，有益於我者即吾師。’晨夕告主界有益之學，避無益之學。學戒弟子曰：‘近學者知，用私者迷，不習無益之學。’交處文人達士，不牽私欲之蒙，不受異端之害。</p> <p>萬事立於誠，恆其心，正其意，</p>

¹² Liu Zhi quoted five historical records. Two of them are apocryphal historical records “世史類編” “人代紀要”. The other three are more reliable records “隋書”，“通鑒綱目” “殊域周咨錄”.

¹³ Liu Zhi, *True Record*, 310-11.

<p>way and for the service of the Lord. The way is manifested by learners' humility and carefulness. The principle of things is important as it can distinguish between understanding and misunderstanding. Do not give up even if you cannot understand just one principle ... If you are diligent to learn Islam, you can broaden the horizon of benevolence and righteousness.</p>	<p>事乃得豫。曰：‘傳學必為明道近主用。其顯跡在於謙和謹慎。明昧之中不違於理，一理不明，不可放過。’.....篤天學者，增廣仁義，分明義理。</p>
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APPENDIX III:

Personal Narrative of Tianfan Dianli (*Selected Essential Explanations of the Proprieties of Islam*)¹

In accordance with the wish of my deceased father, I translated the book *The Rituals and Rules of Islam* (天方禮法). The readers of the book responded that the work was so comprehensive and complicated that it was difficult for them to comprehend. They suggested a beginner's version with selected topics and commentaries. Therefore, I selected topics most important to practical living, edited it and called this work, *Selected Essential Explanations of the Proprieties of Islam*. However, the reader then found this work too concise and beginners could not understand properly. Therefore, after each topic, I added commentaries to ensure the beginners could understand the basic truths. The commentaries came from other places in this work and also external sources that I had collected and they dealt with the learning of Islam. In these commentaries, some comments deal with truths already understood but the explanation is not complete. Other comments serve to enrich. Some comments deal with meaning already explained but the truth conveyed is not straightforward. These extra comments serve to explain the meaning more completely and clearly. Some comments deal with meaning and truth already understood but the beginners still have doubt. Furthermore, some comments have been borrowed from Neo-Confucian sayings for clearer explanation. These comments are really common knowledge but some people with a narrow vision misunderstand the original meaning of the text and create disagreement. Thus, this work also contains questions and answers. They serve to discern the error and solve any puzzle.

Although we have explicated the propriety, which seems to be ordinary matter, the meaning of propriety is profound. If a person remembers it for the sake of his life and determines in his mind not to forget, then he achieves the unity of himself with the heavenly truth and

¹ Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988) 20-21.

there is no separation whatsoever. In this work, some may find the meanings concise and difficult but the reality is that they are quite obvious. In this work, some explanations have been borrowed from the imagery and examples of *Can Ran Wei Miao* 燦然微妙. In order to discuss the truth of Islam, we make our work easier to understand as it is no different to Neo-Confucian works. To learn and obey the Islamic propriety is likewise to learn and obey the teachings of the ancient sages and kings. The religion of holy sages, either in the East or the Arab world, either in ancient or modern time, is the same. However, people nowadays do not study and research this fact and gradually it disappears. Fortunately, it is only the Islamic propriety that still exists.

In this work, the opening part is a discussion of the fundamentals of the religion of Islam. The middle part talks about the rules and regulations. It deals with the heavenly five Endeavors and the five Relationships. It discusses the deepening of principle and nurturing nature. It talks about personal realization, forming family, serving the nation and various matters concerned with living and proper dressing. These issues are discussed concisely. Lastly, the work concludes with marriage and funeral.

This work has twenty chapters and twenty eight sections. The topics are not comprehensive but the content with various illustrations is very comprehensive. While this work does not discuss comprehensively every aspect of propriety, it contains principles and outlines for human living. The learner can enjoy their living accordingly. The prophet Muhammad said, ‘the propriety is the foundation of being human.’ The ancient sage has also made an analogy, ‘the relation between propriety and humanity is similar to the relation between sweet and honey. If honey is not sweet, the honey is not honey. How can humanity be humanity without propriety?’ Therefore, it is said propriety is intimately related to humanity. It is indeed very intricately enwrapped!

My deceased father deeply felt that the Islamic propriety had not been explained and proclaimed. He was once committed to this work but he died without realizing his goal. Although my learning was shallow, I decided to carry on my father’s wish. Now, in

accordance with my limited knowledge, I wrote this work about the Islamic truth. If readers can receive it from the bottom of their hearts and put it into practice, they will not betray the vital meaning of the proclamation by the traditional sages through the ages. This is also my purpose with this humble explanatory work. In terms of the selection of different contents, and the good and bad styles of my writing, I submit myself to correction and affirmation by all co-workers.

A scholar of Islam,

Liu Zhi of Jinling [Nanjing].

APPENDIX IV: RULES AND PROPRIETIES OF ISLAM¹

Chapter One: Original Teaching²

<p>Theme: In the very beginning, before the formation of the ten thousand things³, there is the Real Ruler. It is without limit⁴ and likeness.</p> <p>Explanation: In the very beginning, there is only the Real Ruler's root suchness,⁵ supremely pure and quiet, without limit and form, not controlled by light and darkness [yin/yang], not belonging to the creative transformation. The Real Ruler is really the root and source of heaven and earth, humans and things. All the principle and vital energy come from this root suchness. This is what is known as the ultimate union between heaven and humanity. This is also what is meant by returning to the root and back to the mandate. The Real Ruler is the home return of all principles and vital energies.</p> <p>Theme: When the great mandate had accomplished the creation of heaven and earth, it also created all things therein.</p> <p>Explanation: the Real Ruler is without any form. It</p>	<p>擇要：維初太始，萬物未形，惟一真宰，無方無似。</p> <p>解：無物之初，惟一真宰之本然，至清至靜，無方所，無形似，不牽於陰陽，不屬於造化，實天地人物之本原也。一切理氣，皆從此本然而出。所謂盡人合天者，合於此也。所謂歸根復命者，復於此也。是一切理氣之所資始，亦一切理氣之所歸宿。</p> <p>擇要：命弘開辟之功，始立億兆之類。</p> <p>解：真宰無形，而顯有太極，</p>
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¹ The version used was printed in simplified Chinese in 1988. Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties of Islam* (Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books House 天津古籍出版社, 1988).

² Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties*, 27-39.

³ Alternative translation: myriads of creatures.

⁴ Alternative translation: boundary.

⁵ Root suchness (*ren*) is a fundamental concept of Liu Zhi. The literal meaning of suchness (*ren*) is certainly, verily or yes. An alternative possible meaning is 'in existence'. The modern Chinese usage of '*ren*' means already exists and 'yet to *ren*' means yet to exist. Root is usually translated as 'original' and may mean 'without beginning. Root suchness can thus be paraphrased as 'without beginning and already in existence'. Murata uses the literal word 'suchness' and parallels it with the Arabic word *inniyya*, that-it-is-ness. 'In Islamic philosophy, *inniyya* is used as a synonym for existence (*wujud*). Murata further explicates root suchness as root substance which is the Real Being. Murata, *Sage*, 184.

<p>manifested itself as the Great Ultimate that resolved into darkness and light [yin and yang]. When the darkness and light differentiated, the heaven and earth came into existence. When the heaven and earth had formed, the ten thousand things were created. The heaven and earth are now ready and the subtlety of the Real Ruler embraces therein and threads through them.⁶</p> <p>Theme: Humankind was created in the Muslim lands</p> <p>Explanation: When the creation and all things are in order, then vital energy, water, fire and earth gather in their essences. In the Muslim lands, the forefather Adam was created in the wilderness of the Arab land.</p> <p>Theme: In the Middle [East], the sages are begotten.</p> <p>Explanation: the Middle East is the land of Muslims. It is the land in the midst of heaven, earth and the four directions of the world. Thus, it is called the Middle [East]. The holy sages congregated in this land and humankind had begun in the Middle [East].⁷</p> <p>Theme: Comprehensive rules are set up and thus teaching has been established.</p> <p>Explanation: Adam gave birth to sons and daughters. Generations of sages have been begotten. The practice of the way (<i>dao</i>), the establishing of the teachings, the principle of the transformation of cosmos and the</p>	<p>太極判，而陰陽分，陰陽分而天地成，天地成而萬物生。天地萬物備，而真宰之妙用貫徹乎其中。</p> <p>擇要：造人祖於天方</p> <p>解：天地萬物既備，乃集氣，火，水，土四行之精，造化人祖阿丹於天方之野</p> <p>擇要：降聖賢於中極</p> <p>解：中極，天方之地也。天方處六合之極中，故命曰中極，乃聖賢叢會之地，人民首出之鄉。</p> <p>擇要：創制宏規，而教立焉</p> <p>解：阿丹生育子孫，聖賢代出。其修道立教之規，造化根原之理，及一切事功精微</p>
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⁶ Alternative translation: Then, the subtle function of the true Lord fills all in all.

⁷ Liu Zhi used additional sections, about 300 words long, known as verification, to discuss the central location of the Middle East. He used three geographical documents to affirm his view. This verification is not translated.

<p>meticulous function of all things, have been communicated to Adam from the Real Ruler who designs names, gives rules and declares them to later generations. Adam and the holy sages have not randomly formed their own ideas. Thus, the teaching of Adam is most ancient and not to be supplanted.</p> <p>Theme: From that time on, humankind and creatures have multiplied from generations to generations and spread over all corners of the earth.</p> <p>Explanation: According to the history of ancient Muslims, over a thousand years after Adam, there was a severe flood and many people lost their lives. After three months, the flood subsided. A great sage called Noah arose. He received the divine call to solve the problem of the flood. He sent people across the land to deal with the effects of the flood. Thus, humankind was scattered to all corners of the earth. Two thousand years had passed since the time of Adam.</p> <p>Theme: If the teaching is not ancient, it should still exist. If it is ancient, the teaching should have been lost. Thus, most of the teachings in the modern world are not ancient.</p> <p>Explanation: In the world, there are many countries and each country has its own unique culture. Therefore, scattered humankind has different languages and their writings are also different. Thus, is it possible for humankind to behave the same way? During the period of Three Kings and Five Emperors, their rules and regulations were of course also ancient. The Three</p>	<p>之用，皆阿丹奉真宰明諭，定名，定制，傳及後世，並非阿丹及諸賢聖自出主張而妄為創作者也。故天下為教之最古者，無逾於此。</p> <p>擇要：厥後人物克繁，漸達四外</p> <p>解：按‘天方古史’阿丹千餘載後，洪水泛濫，人民漂沒，三月而洪水退。有大聖人努受命治世，使其徒眾四方治水，四方因有人焉。此去阿丹降世之初，蓋二千餘歲也。</p> <p>擇要：去古近者，其教猶存；去古遠者，其教遂失。故四方之教，多非古教也。</p> <p>解：四方地脉，風氣各有不同，故人之散處於四外者，語音各別，字式各殊，而其行事又安能盡出於一致乎？若三皇五帝去古尚近，制度典章，猶有上古遺風，三代</p>
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<p>Kingdoms era was more recent. After that era, hundreds of scholars emerged with their own distinctive and imaginative thoughts and ideas. They created many schools of thought, each one espousing their own particular theories. Each school developed its own religion and faith. This situation continued unabated. Eventually, not only were there different schools of thought but, even denominations within one school. The aims and doctrines of religious teaching no longer complied with the previous ancient teachings.</p> <p>Theme: Islam is the only religion that passes down through generations of sages. The tradition of thoughts and systems has not been interrupted.</p> <p>Explanation: From the time of Adam to Muhammad, there were many people who had been called to promulgate the teaching. These individuals were called the sages. However, there is a hierarchy of sages. In general, there are four levels. Anyone who is called to promulgate the teaching and has the gift of prophecy is known as the sage..... Six hundred years after Jesus, Muhammad was born. Muhammad was called to eradicate evil words and illuminate the ancient teachings and inaugurate peace to all generations.⁸</p> <p>Theme: From the time when Muhammad was called to sagehood, the teaching of Islam has been known widely to all, spreading across the world.</p>	<p>而後, 去古益遠, 百家諸子, 鑿空杜撰, 人各一言, 家各一教, 接踵而出, 分門別戶, 大與古教不相符矣。</p> <p>擇要: 惟我天方, 得眾聖薪傳, 道統不絕</p> <p>解: 自阿丹起, 至穆罕默德止, 其中受命行教而稱聖人者, 指不勝屈。但同是聖人, 而其品第不同。約而計之, 有四等焉。凡受命行教而有征兆者, 均謂之曰聖人, 如.....爾撒六百年而後, 穆罕默德生, 奉命驅除邪說, 彰明正教, 為萬世開太平矣。</p> <p>擇要: 迄穆罕默德出, 道愈昭明矣</p>
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⁸ Over 200 words have not been translated. Liu Zhi's key point is to emphasize the continuity of Islamic prophethood.

<p>Explanation: Muhammad was a descendent of the royal family of the Muslim land. He was extremely clever and was a highly moral man with supreme moral ethics, a king of the world. He followed the rules of the ancient teachings. The teaching had stopped when Jesus died six hundred years ago. Muhammad was called The Seal, meaning that he was the last of all the prophets. The true Lord communicated to him 6666 verses called Al-Furqan [the criteria].</p>	<p>解: 穆罕默德, 乃天方帝室之胄, 生而神靈, 以大德王天下, 受命行教, 紹爾撒六百年既絕之統, 命曰‘哈聽’, 猶言‘封印云。真宰授經六千六百六十六章, 名曰甫爾加尼。</p>
<p>Theme: Editing the sacred text</p>	<p>擇要: 刪經</p>
<p>Explanation: Text means the revealed text given to holy sages before Muhammad. From the time of Adam to Jesus, there were 114 books. For example, the five books of Moses, the book of David and the gospel of Jesus are the major books. The Real Ruler appointed the prophet Muhammad to edit and revise the sacred texts. He revealed to Muhammad the Furqan [criteria] which contains all the meanings of previous sacred texts</p>	<p>解: 經, 即真宰降於前聖之經也。自阿丹至爾撒, 凡得百十有四部, 如‘討刺特’(降與母撒之經名), ‘則逋爾’(降與達五德之經名), ‘引支勒’(降與爾撒之經名), 皆經之最大者。自穆罕默德出, 真宰悉命裁革, 乃授之以‘甫爾加尼’經, 將前古經義盡皆包括其中。</p>
<p>Question: Someone may ask: ‘Since the sacred texts were given by the Real Ruler, all of them should be complied with. How come that they were edited and revised?’ The answer: ‘the 600 years after the death of Jesus, various ridiculous views arose and confused the truth. The real sacred texts were corrupted and errors came into the texts. Many of them lost their original meaning and they lost their real value. Nevertheless, people still thought they were real and complied with</p>	<p>或問: 曰: ‘古經降由真宰, 概當永遵之矣。而必廢革之, 何也?’ 曰: ‘前古之經, 自爾撒去世六百年來, 異端紛擾, 更換舛謬。古本經文, 多失其真; 真文既失, 而人猶奉為古經, 遵而守之, 以訛傳訛, 勢不至離經叛道不</p>

<p>their teachings. The errors continued to multiply. Eventually, texts were no longer the revealed text and people really rebelled against the truth. Therefore, the holy one⁹ edited and revised the text. Original meanings were restored and errors were erased. The Furqan is set back onto the right track and covers a wide range of truth with accurate balance. It becomes the teaching and rule for living. The editing work stopped the downfall of the truth and restored the eternal shining light of the sacred text, like the sun and moon. This work has profound significance.</p> <p>Theme: To set up the law.</p> <p>Explanation: The law means the rules pertaining to fasting, worship, marriage, funeral rites and so on. Different situations require different ways to use the law. Major occasions mean Hajj and purification, minor means the food and daily living. The law covers all aspects of natural phenomena, propriety, culture, rules, medical treatment, prediction of success and failure and the rule of the nation. These are established by the text. These rules are like an eternal flame, giving eternal brightness which can never be extinguished. From generation to generation, humankind can clearly and unerringly comply with the law. Anyone who is clever and wise should not set himself above or contravene the law.</p> <p>Theme: [Muhammad] summarized the essence of teachings of all the former sages and formed a system. From then on, the way of Islam was clear and complete.</p>	<p>止。是以聖人奉命刪定，存真去偽，返博歸約，蕩蕩平平，是訓是行，砥狂瀾於既倒，炳萬古以日星，廢革之義大矣哉。’</p> <p>擇要：定制</p> <p>解：制如齋拜，婚喪，律度，權衡，大而朝廟，禋祀，小而飲食起居，以及天地，山海，禮樂，文章，醫卜，術數之類，皆遵經而定，世昭恪守，縱有明智，不能逾規而越矩也。</p> <p>擇要：總前聖之精微，而為大成焉，大道於是乎明備</p>
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⁹ The context clearly indicates the holy one is the prophet Muhammad.

<p>Explanation: All the sages in human history resemble the moon in a long lasting night. Once the Utmost Sage appears, he resembles the sun in the mid-day. From Adam to Jesus all the sages in history, their propagation of the way resemble a plant that has roots, buds and branches with leaves and flowers. The way of the Utmost Sage resembles the fruits. On earth, there is no light brighter than the sun. In the growth of a tree, bearing fruit is the completion of growth. No one is as complete as the Utmost Sage in propagating the way in the history of the sages.</p>	<p>解：眾聖之在前古，猶長夜之月。至聖出，則中大之日也。眾聖之道，自阿丹至爾撒，猶根而芽，而干，而枝，而葉，而花。至聖之道，則其果也。天地之明，莫明於日；樹木之備，莫備於果，教道之全，莫全於至聖。</p>
<p>Selected key theme: [Muhammad] teaches the religion of Islam. The aim of Islam is to know the Lord.</p>	<p>擇要：其為教也，以識主為宗旨。</p>
<p>Explanation: The Lord Ruler creatively transforms into all things. He is the root origin of our heart and nature. Owing to the manifestation of the Real Ruler, humans have their original nature. From nature, humans have their heart. Then, I become the crown of creation which takes place in the realm of the innate heaven. Today, with the endeavour of their hearts, humans then know their nature. From knowing their own nature, humans can know the Real Ruler. This takes place in the realm of the acquired heaven. To know the Lord Ruler as the creative transformer is out from my heart and nature which should set upon a firm and right foundation, not able to be shaken by deviating views.</p>	<p>解：主宰者，萬化所自出，而吾心性之本原也。由主宰之顯著，而有我之本性，由本性之賦畀於心，而我得以為萬物之靈，此先天之事也。今日由盡心而得以知性，由知性而即以認識主宰，此後天之事也。認得主宰是造化天地萬物者，是我之心性所從以出者，則腳根正定，不為歧妄所動搖。</p>
<p>Theme: Our endeavour is to revere and serve.</p> <p>Explanation: Reverence means with single-mindedness</p>	<p>擇要：以敬事為功夫</p> <p>解：敬，無一念不專為凜於</p>

<p>and solemnity, you devote yourself to the Lord. Service means each and every one of your acts is done with obedience to him. The single-minded and solemn reverence is concerned with the endeavour of the heart. The obedient action is concerned with the endeavour of the body. Thus, reverence is the origin of service. Service is the function of reverence. If the heart has reverence, then the service in this latter-world can succeed. If the service is without the reverence, then service is in vain.</p> <p>Therefore, to serve the emperor with reverence in the heart means loyalty; to serve the parents with reverence in the heart means filial obedience. In all matters of seeing, hearing, speaking and acting, you should follow properly the rules and proprieties. With these in place, you are not without rules and not abandoning any proprieties. This endeavour is both profound and detailed; both strict and elaborate. By this, humans can achieve the union with heaven as exemplified by the sages and worthies. Therefore, you need to put reverence first in order to serve and obey the Real Ruler. With reverence, you can reap good fruit.</p> <p>Theme: the eventual goal is to return and recover the mandate</p> <p>Explanation: Returning to the root means returning to the beginning. Recovering the mandate means the completion of our heavenly duty. What is meant by the beginning? In the creation of humanity, there is the beginning of stillness, without any evil and without any adulteration of our root substance. What is meant by the heavenly duty of humanity? Humans are created so that by their hearing and seeing they are to understand the</p>	<p>主也。事，無一動不遵主而行也。專凜於主，心之功夫也。遵主而行，身之功夫也。然敬者，事之本；事者，敬之用。心敬，而後事成，其事不敬，雖事猶不事也。</p> <p>故敬以事君則忠；敬以事親則孝；敬於視聽言動之間，則循規蹈矩，自不至無所持循，而失於非禮矣。此中功夫，至精至微，至嚴至密。盡人合天者以此，希聖希賢者亦以此。故凡從事聖教，而奉主宰者，先乎敬而已矣。敬則無往不善。</p> <p>擇要：以歸根復命為究竟</p> <p>解：歸根，返吾自始也。復命，完吾政事也。自始云何？人生而靜之初，無一毫不善，無一毫夾雜之本體也。政事云何？賦命生人之際，耳提面命，直下擔當之重責也。真主造化乾坤，顯揚萬</p>
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<p>task of return. The Real Lord has transformed the heaven and the earth and manifested the basic meanings of all things and these are for the sake of their return.</p> <p>You need to learn diligently, desire for realization and examine yourself. You need to examine things thoroughly, learn to understand the reality of these things and the way in which they develop. You need to work hard and accomplish realization, marriage and governance. Our work is for the sake of returning and recovering the mandate. Thus, Islam is to teach people to know the Lord and return to the root substance; to teach you to give reverence to the Lord and for the accomplishment of the first mandate. After that, you return to the root substance. This is the greatest achievement of Islam.</p> <p>Theme: To obey with piety, the five endeavours are to accomplish all the way of heaven.</p> <p>Explanation: The five endeavours are reciting the <i>Shahadah</i>, ritual prayer, fasting, alms-tax and pilgrimage. Always remember the Real Ruler. In quietness, remember him. In activity, observe things and remember him and do not distract yourself in meaningless thoughts. Say your prayers five times a day at the designated time with utmost diligence and purity of heart. Fast a month within a year. This is to control your fleshly desire. Give alms once a year to the poor, sharing materials in love and virtue with others. Once in a life time, do the pilgrimage and that will strengthen your sincerity of the heart to seek the Lord. When you obey the five endeavours, you have accomplished the</p>	<p>物之原義, 特為此而已。</p> <p>人之篤學, 存養省察, 格致誠正, 其所求者, 求此而已; 成已成物, 修齊治平, 其所推者, 推此而已。是以聖教教人認主, 以返其本體; 教人敬事, 以完其初命。初命完, 本體返, 聖道之極致也。</p> <p>擇要: 敬服五功, 天道盡矣</p> <p>解: 五功者, 念真, 禮真, 齋戒, 捐課, 朝觀天闕也。時念真宰, 靜存動察, 心不妄馳也; 日禮五時, 謹之又謹, 滌之又滌也。歲齋一月, 以制嗜慾之私; 歲捐課財, 以普利物之仁; 終身一觀天闕以實志誠向往之念。五功修完, 而天道盡矣。</p>
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<p>way of heaven.</p> <p>Theme: To hold the five relationships with sincere honour is to accomplish the way of humanity.</p> <p>Explanation: The five relationships are the five ethical principles that are concerned with the relationship between the emperor and the courtier, the father and son, the husband and wife; brother and sister and between friends. In the Middle East, it is also called the five accomplishments. The Emperor and the courtier constitute the country; father and son the family, husband and wife the home; brother and sister constitute business; and friends together constitute [human] virtues. All the above mentioned relations have changeless propriety. If you obey the five relationships, then you have fulfilled the way of humanity.</p> <p>Theme: The learning and achievement [five endeavours and relationships] may be elementary or profound. This depends on the individual.</p> <p>Explanation: The way of Islam originates from one and is not complex. The wise person can understand its depth and profundity while the fool can understand its surface meaning. It depends on the person who may understand the superficial or the deep meaning of Islam. It also happens in any truth seeking that only the wise can come to the truth but the fool can hardly experience truth at all. It requires a courageous effort for anyone who wants to explore the truth.</p> <p>Theme: The person may want to do one thing but not</p>	<p>擇要: 敦崇五典, 人道盡矣</p> <p>解: 五典, 即君臣, 夫婦, 昆弟, 朋友, 五倫之教也. 天方又稱五成. 蓋君臣成其國, 父子成其家, 夫婦成其室, 昆弟成其事, 朋友成其德者也. 皆有當然不易之禮. 五典修完, 而人道盡矣.</p> <p>擇要: 學業精粗, 存乎其人</p> <p>解: 道原至一, 智者見其深, 愚者見其淺; 為精為粗, 存乎其人. 未嘗智者, 予以捷得, 愚者靳以難能, 惟貴人勇往自力耳.</p> <p>擇要: 用行舍藏, 遵乎其人</p>
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<p>others. The principle of action depends on compliance with righteousness and fittingness.</p> <p>Explanation: Righteousness means doing things justly and fittingly. A person who has thought carefully knows what is right. A person who is ignorant may lose the opportunity to do what is right. When we are encountering a situation, may it be proceeding with or backing off, the principle of action should be fittingness. We do not follow others who betray righteousness in order to achieve honour. We do not act improperly to achieve fame. We just hold fast to the true way, taking good care of our words and actions.</p> <p>Theme: There is propriety for marriage and a rule for funerals.</p> <p>Explanation: Marriage and funerals mark two important moments, the beginning and end of the way of humanity. The holy sage uses the way of heaven as the principle and fittingly regulates the rule of law for the whole world and for all further generations. Humankind is to comply diligently. It is enforced strictly without any regard for status, no matter if they are poor, rich, exalted or humble.</p> <p>Theme: In all these regulations of activity and solitude, there is a principle that is unchanging and yet objectively adaptive, creatively enforcing the rule of law.</p> <p>Explanation: Whatever can be seen, heard, spoken, intuited, or situations like eating and resting at home, large and small, there is a historical law to regulate</p>	<p>解：義者，宜也。達者當其可，昧者失其機，為進為退，準乎其義。不欲人違道而干譽，苟且以得名，惟抱道自重而已。</p> <p>擇要：婚姻有禮，喪葬有制</p> <p>解：婚姻，喪葬，乃人道始終之大事。聖人準諸天理，合乎人情，制為教典，行諸天下後世。使人人恪守嚴遵，不因貧富，貴賤而可忽也。</p> <p>擇要：一切動止，皆有經常達變之法也</p> <p>解：凡於視，語默，食息，起居，大小，纖鉅皆有經常之</p>
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<p>human behaviour. So, humans are not to offend others and contravene propriety. At the same time, the law is objective and flexible enough to adapt appropriately, paying attention to the time and the context at that moment. This is to avoid holding firm to arid tradition with rigidity and stubbornly making no progress. In that way, the rule of the law continues to be complied with and yet it is exercised in a flexible manner without unfairness and with due respect to time and context. The rule of law remains the norm.</p> <p>Selected key theme: the rule [for realization] consists of three vehicles. However, it derives from the same principle.</p> <p>Explanation: Vehicle is the means to carry. It carries different rules and meanings. It allows the seekers step by step to work at the rule. The first is said to be the propriety vehicle, which carries both the way of heaven and humanity and all rules of endeavour. You work to get virtues and honour your work also. This is the content of propriety vehicle. The next step is called the way [path] vehicle, which carries the human and material principles, fulfilling the rule in uniting heaven with humanity. You need to understand thoroughly the principle and know thoroughly the nature for the sake of satisfying the rules. The last step is called the principle vehicle, also called the real vehicle, which carries the non-self and non-thing, accomplishing the subtle union between heaven and humanity. Such rule means the self-control is complete and accomplishes the status of 'Real'.</p> <p>Working hard for your virtues and honouring endeavours</p>	<p>法, 以為矩矱, 則不致有干分越禮之行. 又有通變之法, 以適權宜, 則不致有膠泥固滯之病. 用權而不離於正, 雖變而不失其常也.</p> <p>擇要: 法備三乘, 理原一本.</p> <p>解: 乘, 載也; 載諸法義, 以備救道者次第取法也. 初曰禮乘, 總載天道人道, 一切事功之條例. 此勤德敬業者所取法也. 進曰道乘, 總載人理物理, 盡人合天之法程. 此窮理盡性者所取法也. 終曰理乘, 又名真乘, 總載無我無物, 天人一致之微言. 此克己完真者所取法也.</p> <p>勤德敬業, 所以修身也. 窮</p>
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<p>are for body realization. Understanding thoroughly the principle and knowing thoroughly the nature can enlighten the heart. With self control and accomplishing the real, you can see nature. Without endeavour and cultivation, your heart is not illuminated. Such a heart cannot see nature. Without seeing nature, you cannot unite with heaven. Nature is not seen because the selfish 'I' has hidden it. Therefore, the rule of the three vehicles deals with the polishing up of the selfish 'I'. Above the rule of the three vehicles, a transcendent rule of vehicles exists. In it, both heaven and humans are transformed; with no name or trace left. There is no word to describe the experience except that you have to experience it.</p> <p>Selected key theme: Humanity is classified into nine levels but the principal aim derives from one vein.</p> <p>Explanation: It is the same humanity but is classified into nine categories. The sage group has four, namely average, ambassador, great and Utmost Sage. Beneath the group of sage are the great worthies, the wise people, the pure and upright, the good people and the common people. While levels are different, they derive from the same vein. The sage founds the doctrinal content. The worthies assist the sage. The wise people are to spread the doctrine. The pure and upright, good and common people are to hold firm the doctrine.</p> <p>If you do not attain the nature of the sage which is able to found the doctrine, you attain that of the worthies who can assist. If not able to assist, you attain the level of human nature to spread it. If not able to spread it, you attain the level of human nature to receive it. Receiving</p>	<p>理盡性, 所以明心也. 克己完真, 所以見性也. 身不修, 不可以明心. 心不明, 不可以見性. 性不見, 不可以合天. 性之不可見, 己私之蔽也. 三乘之法, 己私之礙也. 三乘之上, 更有超乘一法, 則天人化矣, 名迹泯矣, 非語言文字可傳, 待其人之自會而已.</p> <p>擇要: 人區九品, 道宗一脈.</p> <p>解: 同一人也, 而有九等. 聖四: 曰聖, 曰欽聖, 曰大聖, 曰至聖. 次於聖者, 曰大賢, 曰知者, 曰廉士, 曰善人, 曰庸常. 等雖不同, 而其歸宗一也. 聖, 行教者也. 賢, 弼教者也. 知, 傳教者也. 廉, 善, 庸常, 守教者也</p> <p>不能行之, 則弼之; 不能弼之, 則傳之; 不能傳之, 則受之. 則遵而守之, 以之復歸根, 無歉於心, 斯無負此</p>
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<p>and keeping the faith are the ways to return to the root. Then, your heart has no regret and you do not fail in this life.</p> <p>Theme: The way of Islam is without any image. The Islamic teaching has law and no one is to contravene them.</p> <p>Explanation: The way of Islam is to be understood by its teaching. Without teaching, laws cannot be established. The way is naturally to be the principle of heaven. The teaching is a guidance/regulation for humankind to follow. The law is to distinguish between the heavenly principle and human desire, discerning right from wrong, guiding everyone in the right direction.</p> <p>To establish the teaching with an idol is ridiculous. To obey the teaching and rule with self-centred serenity and indulgence is greed. Indulgence will result in immorality. Immorality will forget the seeking of kindness. Without the kind, seeking heart, evil desire will arise. Therefore, the truth is veiled and the way to the real Lord is blocked. Therefore, the sages proclaim the truth in the world and establish Islam, without any pictorial images. Human beings who follow Islam and the sages should obey the law without any self-centred serenity and indulgence. Outwardly, human beings should not be tempted by idols. Inwardly, they should not be burdened by selfish desire. Therefore, the sages have established Islam that is superior to other religions.</p> <p>Theme: The way of the holy sage envelops and penetrates everywhere whereas his teaching is both right</p>	<p>人矣。</p> <p>擇要：道有教而無像，教有法而無身</p> <p>解：道非教不明，教非法不立。夫道也者，天理當然之則也；教也者，示人循是則而行之者也；法也者，析理欲辨是非，規天下於無妄者也。</p> <p>立教而設像，曰妄；奉法而逸身，曰私。逸，則淫；淫，則忘善；忘善，則惡心生，真理蔽，而歸真之路塞也。是以聖人欲明道於天下，但立教而不設像。眾人奉教以從事於聖人，但守法而不顧身。外不為像惑，內不為身累，所以聖人之教卓越於百氏之上也。</p> <p>擇要：是以聖人之道，包貫</p>
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<p>and grand. Those who believe do not doubt and puzzle.</p> <p>Explanation: The way of the holy sage is the way of heaven. The religion of the holy sage is the practice of the way of heaven. To believe in the holy sage's way is to obey the rules of the way of heaven and follow the tract of the way of heaven. Note that this is the way of heaven. It is broad and extensive, inclusive of all things, penetrating all things. Heaven and earth are within its bounds. Even minute dust particles cannot filter through. The way of heaven unifies and governs by making the sky clear, the earth peaceful, the sun and moon shining, summer and winter alternating without end, also the mountain stable, the water running, flower and tree blooming and decaying and bird flying.</p> <p>Now that the real Lord decorated [the world with] the ten thousand things, how could they fit into their roles and develop their functions? If they were under bondage, how could they develop healthily? Therefore, according to the way of heaven, the holy sages founded the religion of Islam so that people would not be led astray and influenced by any devious views. People who are edified by the holy teaching are like grass and trees that are gently blown by the wind of the spring, like hibernating insects awakened by the thunder and like people with knowledge and wisdom. They are full of life and live according to their natures and within the boundary of the law. If they live and settle in the most right and ideal environment, how can they doubt Islam at all?</p>	<p>無極; 聖人之教, 正大至中; 聖教之人, 不二不惑.</p> <p>解: 聖人之道, 即天道也. 聖人之教, 即天道流行者也. 聖教之人, 即順天道之條理, 承天道之軌則, 而奉之以從事者也. 是道也, 至廣至大, 無物不包, 無物不貫, 天地歸其範圍纖塵無所遺漏, 天之所以清, 地之所以寧, 日月之所以代明, 寒暑之所以不息, 與夫山之定, 水之動, 花木之榮瘁, 鳥鳶之飛躍, 皆道之所以彌綸也.</p> <p>然丕冒萬物, 而萬物何以各正? 鉗束萬物, 而萬物何以生全? 是以聖人因道立教, 使人不惑於歧趨, 不搖於異處. 沐聖人之教者, 如草木之被春風, 蟲魚之感雷蟄. 良知良能, 活活潑潑, 率於性而範於教, 咸安於正大至中之域, 又何二之可惑哉?</p>
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<p>Theme: While Muslims have settled in all corners of the world, they meet [religiously] within a house. The Muslims have a long history and the teachings have remained unchanged.</p> <p>Explanation: The way is the same regardless of time and location. Do the teachings change with time and location? Does humankind change with time and location? The holy teaching has lasted for centuries. Rules and proprieties remain unchanged. Followers have scattered to all corners of the world and their determination has remained unchanged. Thus, Islam has a long and lasting history.</p> <p>Theme: Islam has been transmitted continuously and should be trusted as a magnificent way of living by the law. It has spread across the generations, remained unchanged and is prosperous.</p> <p>Explanation: Continuity means there is no loss of momentum or pause. Trust is a belief. Our religion began from Adam, (and continued through) Noah, to Abraham and on for centuries. Sages emerged and continued until Muhammad who made the collection. The later worthies and learned persons then expounded the key meanings. Many people proclaimed the way and many people continuously received the way. So far, the history of the way is over 7,000 years old. The rules and regulations of the way have remained unchanged. The way has prospered continuously and spread far and wide. It is to be transmitted for generations to come and remain forever prosperous. Can this be doubted?</p>	<p>擇要：會八方如一室，合千古若一時</p> <p>解：道無今古，方所，教豈有今古，方所哉？人又豈為今古，方所移易哉？故聖教長歷千古，而典禮不替；被教之人遺遍八荒，而志趨不移，其廣大悠遠有如此者。</p> <p>擇要：亶亶相傳，洵不易之宏規，垂萬世而貞盛也。</p> <p>解：亶亶，不倦不絕之意；洵，信也。吾教自阿丹歷施師，努海，易卜刺欣而下數百代，聖人接踵相繼，迄穆罕默德為集大成。後賢，後學，闡其要旨，傳者不倦，受者不絕，至今閱七千餘年。制度，規模，視今猶古，愈延愈盛，愈播愈遠，其足以垂萬世而隆今古也，復奚疑哉？</p>
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<p>A Survey of Collected data:</p> <p>.....Ming dynasty historian Long Yin (朗英) and his 7th Revised Collections (a supplementary history of Yuen and Ming dynasty, 58 Volumes in total): The mosque came to China in the time of the Sui dynasty. Islamic teachings and rules cover many aspects of Muslim daily living. Our Confucianism is inferior to it. According to Islam, the wealth, poverty, life and death of any person are predestined. However, cults tempt people into believing in idols for their blessings. Muslims serve the Lord and emphasize filial piety and worship no other. Some Muslims are rich. In Confucianism, we do not practise righteousness to the poor even if they are close to us, let alone care for strangers. Muslims give alms each month to their neighbours. Even non Muslim can also receive aid. Chinese Confucianism requires obedience to the teachings of the sages. Some positive traditions remain but others have been lost. However, Muslims worship the Lord and serve their parents. Their tradition of seeking righteousness and fostering assistance remains unchanged through history. Daoism and Buddhism are inferior to Confucianism and they are not worthy for any discussion.....¹⁰</p>	<p>集覽:</p> <p>.....七修類稿曰：清真寺入中國，乃隋時，其法有數種，吾儒亦有不如。富貴貧賤壽夭，一定也，惑於異端，而信事鬼神矣。彼惟敬主事祖之外，一無所崇，富貴者亦不少矣。即吾儒雖至親密友之貧乏者，多莫尚義，他人又何暇問之。彼於同郡貧人，月有給養之數；他方來者，亦有助儀。吾儒守聖人之教，或存或亡。彼敬主事親，尚義樂助，終身無改焉。道釋二教，又在吾儒之下，不足論也.....</p>
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¹⁰ This historical data is the most detailed discussion in this chapter. It consists of about 1600 words. This account is reaffirmed in even greater detail in Liu Zhi's final work.

Chapter Two: the Real Ruler¹¹

<p>Theme: The magnificent Real Ruler is the one, the only one. He is without any image. He created heaven and earth, humankind and all things.</p> <p>Explanation: In the massive cosmos, there is one and only one Real Ruler. He is without image and is most subtle. No words can express or capture the essence or the subtlety. He is the Lord of creation and un-creation. The Lord emanated all things that we may find in pairs or talk about. The Lord is prior to all heaven, earth, humankind and all creation.</p> <p>Additional Explanation: One is unique and this uniqueness has two meanings. The first meaning of the unique one is that it transcends all things. The second meaning of the unique one is that it embraces all things.</p> <p>The transcendent One is beyond manifestations. Unlike the transcendent One, the heaven, earth and all things have manifestations. The vital energy then transforms to give out their forms. This is the number [function] of the acquired heaven. The root suchness of the Real Ruler does not have any manifestation. It does not participate in the vital energy's transformation and is not determined by the number of the acquired heaven. The Real Ruler does not have any boundary and physical form, it is most pure and subtle, and is difficult to describe. The unique One means it is transcendent over heaven, earth and all</p>	<p>擇要：維皇真宰，獨一無相，生天生地，生人生物</p> <p>解：太空冥冥，有真宰焉，獨一無二也，無相至妙，難以言喻也。凡有匹偶，或可言喻，皆受造之物，非造物之主也。天地人物，皆有匹偶，皆可言喻，皆真宰之所生化者也。真宰，則先天地人物而有者也。</p> <p>原注：獨一有二解：一，超天地萬物而為獨一；一，包天地萬物而為獨一。</p> <p>超之而為獨一者，天地萬物，其眾著者也，氣化也，後天之數也；真宰之本然，不牽於眾著，不雜於氣化，不入於後天之數。無方無體，純粹至妙，不可名言，此則超天地萬物而為獨一也。</p>
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¹¹ Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties*, 40-46.

<p>things.</p> <p>With regard to the unique immanent One, it is unique because it is not to be separated from manifestation and thus become ‘unique’. It is not to separate from the many. It creates all matters from the beginning to now, both visible and invisible and governs their activities with its real principle. The substance is not separated from its function and it is undifferentiated from all materials. This One is unique because outside the One, there is no manifestation. Outside this One, there is no boundary. This is the meaning of the immanent One.</p> <p>Guise has two levels of meaning. The first is the guise with visible form, the other is invisible. All things that the eye can see, the ear can hear, the nose can smell, the mouth can speak, the hand and legs can move and dance, are visible guises. All things that the heart can think and can reach are to be understood and belong to the invisible guise. Thus, the real substance is without manifestation, colour, boundary, understanding, guessing and language. These are not the substance of the real Lord. If you search exhaustively the way, you should think. These thoughts are guise and may lead to awakening awareness. The Ruler makes transformation into various [outward/visible] guises and the Ruler is not these guises. It inspires all awakening awareness and is not the awakening awareness.</p> <p>Theme: The substance exists before the division of the two vital energies [ying/yang]. The function manifests</p>	<p>包之而為獨一者：獨，非遺眾以為獨，一，非遺萬以為一也；合古今色妙，而統入於真理流行之中，體用不分，渾同大備，獨之外無眾也。一之外無萬也，此則包天地萬物而為獨一也。</p> <p>‘相’ 有二等：有有形之相，有無形之相。凡目可視，耳可聞，鼻或嗅，口可言，手足可蹈握，皆有形之相也。凡心可思，意可至，解悟可得，皆無形之相也。故真體無著。著形，著色，著位，著意慮，著摹想，著覺悟，著語言，即非其體也。窮道之人，凡有慮想，其所慮想皆相也；才有覺悟，其所覺悟亦相也。惟宰造化一切色相，而非一切色相；啟發一切覺悟，而非一切覺悟。</p> <p>擇要：體立於二氣未肇之</p>
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<p>itself after the formation of the image of all things.</p> <p>Explanation: The substance is concerned with the independence [of the Real Ruler]. Function is concerned with the original power. The function is not equated with the substance because the function derives from the substance. The substance is not the function but function can manifest the substance. The substance and function are not the same but they cannot be separated. It is similar to the relation between ten and one. One is not equal to ten but is not different from ten. Ten is not one but the whole of ten is one.¹²</p> <p>The substance [of the Real Ruler] is prior and the function later manifests. This is the way to describe the order of the hidden substance and the manifested function. It is not the way to say one has original priority over the other. Before the appearance of anything, the function [of the Real Ruler] is enclosed by the substance which is subtle or not apparent and the function cannot fathom. After the appearance of things, the substance is hidden within the function and seen in the function. The substance [is the Real Ruler, it is] not the [visible] substance. Thus, this substance cannot be understood analogically as the substance of all things. The function is [the function of the Real Ruler and] not the [visible] function. This function cannot be analogously described as the function of all.</p> <p>Additional Explanation: the name of the substance is similar to the name of ten. The name of the function is</p>	<p>先,用著於萬象既形之後</p> <p>解: 體,言乎其自立之本也. 用,言乎其本具之能也. 用不即體,因體而有用; 體不即用; 藉用以為體, 體與用, 蓋不即亦不離者也. 若十與一然, 一不即十, 而非不即十; 十不即一, 而十之全體皆一也.</p> <p>體立於先,用著於後,此言乎隱顯之次第,非體用自有先後也. 無物之先,用含於體,其體微,而用不可測. 有物之後,體隱於用,其用著,而後其體乃見. 是體也,乃無體之體,故不可比喻萬物之體. 是用也,乃不用之用,故不得擬似於眾有之用.</p> <p>原注: 體之為名,猶十之為</p>
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¹² Oneness may be divided into supra-numerical and numerical. Liu Zhi here talks about supra-numerical one. The supra-numerical one can be interpreted and understood as the inclusive unique one. Murata, *Sage*, 504-06.

<p>similar to the name of one. Ten is not one. However, the whole of substance is one. As the substance, the ten consists of [many] one[s]. One is not ten. As the function, all the ones are acts of the ten. The substance and function of the Real Ruler is related similarly. The whole of substance [of the Real Ruler] is the function and all the functions are [acts of] the substance. Therefore, the two are not to separate. However, the two cannot be united because they have different meanings.</p>	<p>名也。用之為名，猶一之為名也，十不即一，而全體皆一。是十也者，全以一為體者也。一不即十，而合一以成十。是一也者，全為十之用者也。真宰之體用，亦若是而已。全體是用，全用是體。固分之而無可分，合之而義又有別也。</p>
<p>For everything that exists in this world, there is an assured suchness and there is also a causal suchness. Assured and causal suchness are not separable. When one thing exists, it follows that all that relates to this thing exists. It is not a chronological event. For example, it is like ice and coolness, fire and hotness. It is not ice first and then coolness comes afterwards, fire first and then hotness. The substance of the Real Ruler is like causal suchness. The function is like his assured suchness. However, the two have the difference of hidden and manifested and yet there is no chronological priority. In order to understand the Real Ruler in the future, you should note the perspective of hidden and manifested.</p>	<p>凡有一物，必有一物之當然。一物之所以然，當然與所以然，非可判而分之者也。一有俱有，非有待於時刻先後者也。譬冰之與寒，火之與熱，非先有冰而後有寒，先有火而後有熱也。真宰之體，即真宰之所以然也。真宰之用，即真宰之當然也。但有隱顯之次第，無時日之後先也。以後凡含先後次第，皆以隱顯會之始得。</p>
<p>Theme: Prior to the existence of the Real Ruler, there was no other beginning. Posterior to it, there is no end. The size of its root substance is so massive there is no boundary. It is so small that nothing is within him.</p>	<p>前無始，後無終，大無外，細無內。</p>
<p>Explanation: The Real Ruler exists before all things. So,</p>	<p>真宰先萬有而立，故其前無</p>

<p>there is nothing prior to him. It exists after all things end. So, there is nothing posterior to it. Its substance is all inclusive and thus there is nothing outside him. Its function is all penetrating and thus there is nothing smaller inside him.</p> <p>It does not have any beginning but he initiated the beginning of all things. It does not end but govern the ending of all things. It is so inclusive that he has no boundary. It is so penetrative and therefore very meticulous. Thus, it can be so tiny without limit. It is before the beginning and governs the ends of all things. Within it, there is no boundary and it is able to penetrate all boundaries. Outside it, there is no outer boundary and it includes all boundaries. This beginning, end, outside and inside phenomena may be accounted for by the emanation and penetration of the root suchness and the hiddenness and manifestation of the subtle function.</p> <p>Theme: The true Lord has no image, takes no location, no nearness or farness. No other being is equal to it. It is not dependent on any other existence.</p> <p>Explanation: Image, location, nearness and farness, equals are created by transformation. The Real Ruler is un-transformed and has no image, location, near or far and equal. Since no image is like him, it can then transform into image, location, near and far and equal. Since it does not take any location, it can allocate all locations. Since it is not nearness or farness, it can measure both near and far. Since there is no equal that can manage it, it can support and arrange all phenomena</p>	<p>始；真宰後萬有而存，故其後無終，真宰體無所不包，故其大無外，真宰之用無微不入，故其細無內。</p> <p>無始而開萬始之始，無終而統萬終之終，無內無外，即始即終，即內即外。始終內外，無非其本然之所流貫也；始內外，無非其妙用之所隱著也</p> <p>擇：無形似，無方所，無遐邇，無對待</p> <p>解：形似，方所，遐邇，對待，皆緣造化而有者也。真宰不屬於造化，故無形似，方所，遐邇，對待也。惟無形似，故能造化一切形似；惟無方位，始能安置一切方位；惟無遐邇，方能量度一切遐邇；惟無對待，乃能分配一</p>
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<p>of equals.</p> <p>Theme: [The Real Ruler] governs all the principles of all things and their developments. It controls the heaven and the destiny of humanity.</p> <p>Explanation: The principle of all things is embedded in the subtle function. The numerical is the extension and expanding use of its function. Heaven is the biggest in the transformation; humanity is the most spiritual. All these derive from its subtle function. What can exceed its boundary? The entirety [of all things] derives from the transformation. What things are not under its control? Therefore, the Real Ruler controls and also transcends all things.</p> <p>Theme: The Lord creatively transforms [into all things] but it does not transform. The real Lord itself has no trace but it has left all subtle traces. However, is there not anything that is without its trace?</p> <p>Explanation: The Lord masterminds the transformation and it does not transform. The fact that all things are transformed is due to the Lord's arrangement and adjustment. The subtle function of the Lord can penetrate the traces of all things but its own substance is without any trace. All traits of things were formed by its subtle function. The one who transforms others is necessarily not inside the transformation. From the arrangement of things, it is impossible to speculate on the cosmic arrangement of the Lord. Therefore, the root substance of the Lord is unchanging and yet it transformed into all things. It is not formed by the traits of all things. Also, it</p>	<p>切對待。</p> <p>擇要：綱維理數，掌握天人</p> <p>解：理，其妙用之含蘊者也。數，其妙用之蕃衍者也。天，其造化中之最大者也。人，其造化之至靈者也。總由於妙用，孰能越其範圍？總出其造化，孰不聽其操縱？故真宰之綱維掌握，超越乎萬有也。</p> <p>擇要：主萬化而不化，莫非其化；妙萬迹而無迹，孰非其迹？</p> <p>解：主持萬化，而本不化。萬化之所以能化，莫不胥其斡旋也。妙通萬迹，而本無迹。萬迹之所以成迹，無非藉其陶鑄也。斡旋萬化者，必不為萬化所斡旋，而萬化亦莫能測其斡旋，故不化愈神其化也。陶鑄萬迹者，必不為萬迹所陶鑄，而萬迹莫能測其陶鑄，故無迹愈顯其</p>
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<p>is impossible to speculate on the great transformation based on the traits. Therefore, that the Lord has no trait in itself means that the transformation is indeed a miracle.</p> <p>Additional Explanation: Transformation and traits are two but one entity. Both of them are manifestations of the function of the real Lord. Transformation is to awaken awareness of the subtle function of the real Lord. Trait is the concrete physical matter and can be observed from its subtle function. The function and substance are absolutely not two different entities. The transformation of all things manifests the change of the function of the real Lord. All things have their particular traits. This is really to prove the existence of the real Lord. Therefore, without transformation and trait, there is no other way to understand the real Lord. If you depart from the real Lord and erroneously understand transformation and trait, there is no way to understand transformation and trait.</p> <p>Theme: The real Lord is omniscient, omnipotent, perfect and good in all.</p> <p>Explanation: This is to say that the real substance of the Lord has no trace. Its subtle function has all sufficiency. As for knowledge, it is omniscient. Its knowledge is different from sensory knowledge. The spirit of the real Lord is omnipresent. It is insightful and illuminates all ancient and modern subtle principles. As for power, it is omnipotent. However, this power is different from the power of concrete action. The transformation of the real Lord spreads out into the whole creation. The beginning</p>	<p>亦也</p> <p>‘化’與‘迹’，合二為一，體現了真主的用。化，是可以參悟真主的妙用；迹，則是在具體事物上，可觀察到的真主的用妙。真主的用和真主的體，絕不能說是兩回事。萬物的演化，就體現了真主的用的變化。萬物有其特有的迹象，正是真主實有的證明。所以，離開化與迹去認識真主，是無法認識的；離開真主而誤化與迹，也沒有化與迹了。</p> <p>擇要：至知也，至能也，至全也，至善也。</p> <p>解：此言真體無朕，而妙用無不具足也。至知者，無所不知，而不同於有覺之知；靈妙克周，極人世之上下幽冥，莫不在其昭鑒也。至能者，無所不能，而不同於有為之能；大化流行，極人世之生滅往復，莫不被其推移</p>
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<p>and return of all things is moved by the real Lord's transformation. Any material thing that develops is not outside its function. All that it has created, they are all self-contained. The transformation is complicated but it is done with precision and thus is most perfect. The root substance of the Real Ruler is pure and not contaminated. The created metal, wood, water, fire and earth are the elements of material things. The transformation of these elements nurtures to become all things. The eventual things are most subtle and good. These four virtues [knowledge, power, perfection and goodness] affirm that the real Ruler is the Lord. The Lord is also the cause for the transformation to take place.</p> <p>Additional Explanation: The four virtues 'knowledge, power, perfection and goodness' are the cause for things to exist. They also penetrate into the images and substances of all things. Before the formation of the cosmos, nothing exists except the lofty Real Ruler. All things are formed in the real Lord because they are embedded in his knowledge. They are then seen in his power and they end up perfectly in the virtue of the Lord's goodness. If there is no knowledge of the Lord, there is no principle for any existence of things. If there is no power of the Lord, nothing is able to take on image and substance. If there is no perfection of the Lord, all things cannot continue their transformation and begetting. How can things be self-contained and fill the whole cosmos? If there is no goodness of the Lord, they cannot take various shapes and forms. Do not all things fit nicely for their advantage and in their good time?</p>	<p>也。其功用彌綸，萬有俱足，錯綜變化，前定無差，故為至全。其本體純粹，一塵不染，五行化育，各妙至善。此四德者，即真宰之以為真宰，亦即萬化之所以成萬化之由也夫。</p> <p>知，能，全，善四者，成物之終始，而貫乎物之表裡者也。太始無物，惟一真湛然。而萬物之所以成物者，乃蘊於其知，次見於其能，始成之以全，終繼之以善。苟非知，無以具萬有之理；非能，無以著萬有之象；非至全，何以能化化生生，無所不備而充滿乎宇宙？非至善，何以得形形色色，無有不美，而恰合乎時宜？</p>
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<p>Theme: the Lord created all things without depending on any precondition. The Lord has transformed all things and they continue to transform. With its mercy, the Lord enables life to multiply. All things have their needs without any shortage. The Lord eternally and endlessly gives life to all things.</p>	<p>擇要：作焉而不待，化焉而不窮，育焉而不遺，於焉而不竭</p>
<p>Explanation: the subtle function is omnipresent. As for the transformation, it is naturally done without depending on any coinciding conditions. Talking about the transformation of the Lord into ten thousand things, it is about ten thousand things in their complexity that transform and develop without end and boundary. Talking about the transformation of the Lord into many lives, it is about ten thousand things that receive their needs without any neglect. Talking about the Lord's giving to ten thousand things, it is about the Lord who satisfies endlessly all the needs of nature. These four virtues are the reasons that the Real Ruler endlessly transforms into ten thousand things and they ceaselessly originate from him.¹³</p>	<p>解：此言妙用流行，而施為無不周遍也。語其造作，則自然而然，不待因緣之湊合。語其變化，則錯行來而並無窮盡之涯岸。語其涵育則萬物莫不各得其所，而無一遺漏。語其賦於，則天人莫不各充其量，而並無已竭。此四德者，即真宰之所以生化無窮，而萬物之所以往復無已也。</p>
<p>Theme: The Lord has movement and stillness [hidden and manifested. He is not unchanging]. This is the reason for the ever changing [of all things].</p>	<p>擇要：動靜不常，其生生之本也。</p>
<p>Explanation: Here, it is about movement and stillness. It is a metaphorical way of saying the hidden and manifested Real Ruler. There is no such thing as movement and stillness in him. It is merely said here because the subject of transformation is discussed. The transformation of the Real Ruler begins in the movement</p>	<p>解：此言動靜，即喻隱顯也。真宰，無動無靜也。真宰無動無靜，而此云動靜者，就造化而言也。先天之造化，起於一理之動，後天之造</p>

¹³ An additional explanation of about 70 words have not been translated.

of his principle in the stage of former-heaven. In the stage of latter-heaven, it begins from the movement of his vital energy. From the movement and stillness, the principle and vital energy figuratively explain the Real Ruler's hidden and manifested aspects. This also reflects the transformation of the Real Ruler, manifests the subtle function of the Real Ruler flowing out into the cosmos. The meaning of non-constancy is that there is movement and then follows by stillness. Also, stillness is followed by movement, like an eternal cycle without end. All things cannot exist. They exist because of the work of movement and stillness of the principle-vital energy. All things cannot transform. They are transformed because of the Lord's hidden and manifested aspects. Therefore, it is said that the Real Ruler is the root cause of all things.

Additional Explanation: The movement of [the Real Ruler] forever unceasingly moves. The stillness of the Real Ruler is eternally quiet. There is stillness in movement, movement in stillness. However, whether it is movement or stillness, it is manifested in material things. Whether in movement you do not know any movement or in stillness, you do not know any stillness, this refers to the mechanism of transformation and flowing out of the subtlety. You need to explain the meaning of movement and stillness and cannot seek their form. The movement and stillness are not constant. It is not one moment of movement and then next moment of stillness, not movement of this side and stillness on the other side. Both poles have movement and stillness. In stillness, there is movement and in movement, there is stillness. This happens without end. When there is a

化, 起於一氣之動. 以理氣之動靜, 喻真宰之隱顯, 乃神其造化之機, 申其妙用流行之自也. 不常, 調時起時息, 時息時起, 如循環之無端也. 萬物無以為生, 而生於理氣之動靜. 萬物無以為化, 而化於真宰之隱顯. 故曰: 其生生之本也.

動者一於動, 靜者一於靜, 或動中有靜, 或靜中有動, 皆物也. 若動而不知其何以動, 靜而不知其何以靜, 恰又無時不動, 無時不靜, 此造化之機, 流行之妙也. 只可以動靜之義解, 不可以動靜之形求. 動靜不常, 非謂此一時動, 彼一時靜, 這一邊動, 那一邊靜, 而果有動靜之兩端也. 動也靜, 靜亦動, 絕無止息. 止息則間斷, 間斷則天地毀矣. 譬如人之呼吸, 總一氣之流行, 豈可

<p>break, it causes the destruction of the heaven and earth. A similar example is like human breathing. Breathing takes place all the time. How can there be a break in breathing? Another example is the coming spring. The tree develops branches because of the yang movement, causing the temperature to rise. When the autumn comes, the leaves wither because of the <i>ying</i> quietude, causing the temperature to lower and the drying up of leaves. The temperature reaches its climax and then drops to the bottom and return up again. Is there any moment of non-movement?</p> <p>Theme: Qur'an 112th chapter says, 'the Lord is the one and only one Lord. The Lord is the source of all things. It depends on no other. It does not reproduce and is not begotten. There is nothing that can compare with it.</p> <p>Explanation: Al-Ikhlās is the name of the 112th Sura of Qur'an. It specifies the real principle of the Real Ruler. 'Say' means the Real Ruler decrees to the holy sages who proclaim to the people. 'Is' is a verb that emphasizes the reality of the Ruler and summarizes the content of this chapter. The heart and way cohere, the soul and subtlety unite. Consequently, one can affirm that it is the true Lord. Apart from it, there is no Lord. 'One' is the beginning of all numbers. It unites all the parts within a ten thousand and yet transcends the beginning and end of the ten thousand. 'Source' means the return of all things. The Lord begets all things and also transcends all things inside out. When a woman gives birth, this is to reproduce. When material forms of life reproduce another form, this is to reproduce. The real Lord has nothing like that. There is no place for it to</p>	<p>有一息間斷？又如樹木，陽動而舒，氣上而升也；當秋則敗，陰靜而斂，氣下降也。升至盡頭，則退而降，降至盡頭，復轉而升，何有一刻停緩而不動耶？</p> <p>擇要：淑真篇云：“曰：是，主，一也；主，究竟也。無產，無所產；無一與之配。</p> <p>解：‘淑真’，是真經第 112 章之篇名。專言真宰至實之理也。‘曰’，真宰示諭聖人，令以告人之語也。‘是’是信實之辭，統含通章之意；心與道契，神與妙合，自然是，無有不是也。‘一’，乃萬數之自始，統乎萬，而貫乎萬之始終者也。‘究竟’，乃萬物之歸終，成乎萬而通萬之表裡者也。婦生子曰“產”。又凡物生物如本者曰“產”。真主無等類，無所從出，故無產，亦無所產。非若異教</p>
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<p>reproduce. It reproduces nothing and is not begotten. Other religions making such ridiculous claims, declares the Lord has a son and daughter. They are begotten by the Lord. Someone also says, ‘the Lord has a father. He is begotten by the father.’ The above ‘no one is comparable to it’ means the Lord is the most exalted one. No other can be equal with him. If there is one, the real Lord, then who is the second? How can one say that it is the only one? This is the meaning that the real Lord is the only one. The whole chapter of <i>Al-lkhlās</i> narrates the existence of the real Lord. Its existence is concerned with the idea of one. The meaning of one and only has been fully explained. The real Lord is the source of all things, it does not reproduce. When one says no one is comparable to the real Lord, one really affirms the reality of one. When a learner is able to appreciate how the one is to be the one, he does not need more analysis and naturally will be able to understand.</p> <p>Additional Explanation: From one, it gives rise to and completes the ten thousand. One penetrates the beginning and end of ten thousand. Ten thousand derives from one, governs by one. Ten thousand must have one. Therefore, within the ten thousand, every one of them is one. Without one, there is no ten thousand. The root substance of one is eternally unchanging and unmoving but as a number one can give rise to countless other numbers. If one is to disperse, it can become million. If one is to increase greatly, it becomes ten billion. No matter it is ten, hundred, thousand, and ten thousands and billion; it cannot do without one. Without one, no number may be formed. Once you know the meaning, you can work it out. That is the reason [in Quran 112:1],</p>	<p>荒誕, 謂真主有子, 為其產; 又有父, 為其所產也. “無一與之配”者, 至尊無對, 絕無別一與之相配而為偶也. 若一有配, 則是二矣, 復可名一乎哉? 是則主之為主也已. 通篇喻主. 只一“一”字盡之矣. 曰究竟, 曰‘無產’. 曰‘無所產’, 曰‘無一與之配’, 皆所以明夫 “一”之為一之實也. 學者理會得 ‘一’之為 ‘一’, 則通篇之義不求解訓而自能了達矣</p> <p>廣義: 一者, 始乎萬, 成乎萬, 而貫乎萬之始終者也. 萬生於一, 統於一. 萬必需一, 一不需萬也. 故萬之中, 個個皆一, 缺一不成萬矣. 一之本體, 不變不動, 而其為數, 則無窮無盡. 故淆而為二, 圍而為三, 分而為百千, 散而為億萬. 百也, 千也, 萬億也, 皆不能逃一而自為數也. 經義通篇, 只以一字貫之, 故首云 ‘主一’,</p>
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the Lord is one and at the end of the chapter, none is like him. The relation between the Real Ruler and all things is like one and all the numbers. The original substance [root suchness] of one is all-inclusive, all-penetrating, without surplus and shortage and with all sufficiency. One can beget any number but it is not equal to any number which must begin with one. One is similar to any number but not equal to the number. One naturally penetrates into other numbers. The root substance of one is eternally unchanging and unmoving but one can change into ten thousand numbers. The root substance of the one is without increase or decrease but this one can naturally increase or decrease the ten thousand numbers. One has neither beginning nor attachment to any number. It becomes the beginning of any number which has to attach to the one. One is the beginning of any number but it is not attached to any number. Therefore, ten, hundred, thousand, ten thousand and countless other numbers have their source in one which is the beginning. Other numbers attach to one. All numbers including ten, hundred, thousand and ten thousand have their beginnings in one and are founded on one. The root substance of one is unparallel and none is like one. Any number is formed by addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. If you take away this way of thinking, there is no existence of number. The result remains to be the same: one.

Explanation: Alternatively, the purpose of the Quran's 112th Sura is possibly to inform the seeker about the way. One is pure but two means contamination. Seekers with oneness of heart are without contaminated thoughts. From the heart, the seeker can give single-minded action.

末復云‘無一與之配’。蓋以真宰之於萬物，更猶一之與萬數也。一之本然，無所不包，無所不貫，無欠無餘，全體自足。而其生數也，不等於數，而為數之所由始。其同數也，不等於數，而自與數相為周通。一之本體，不變不動，而自能變動萬數，一之本體，無增無減，而自能增減萬數。一之本體，無所從起，無所依附，而自為萬數之從起，萬數之所附，故十百千萬，至於無算之數，皆一為之資始而立根也。一之本體無匹無配而成為萬數之匹配。匹配，即萬數之所以為數也。萬數，由匹配而結成也，匹配釋，萬數滅，仍復一矣。

或曰：‘淑真篇’，為求道者言也。一則純，二則雜，求道者，心乎一，則無雜矣。一乎其心，則必一乎其趨，則其身心融化，而渾同於真主之

Then, the body and heart of the seeker merge and cannot be differentiated from the root suchness of the real Lord. Because of this, outside the real Lord there will be needless diversion [error], losing your concentration. So, you will not even ask where the one comes from. Such questions may shake your firm foundation, lose your single-mindedness and contaminate your purity.	本然矣。如此，則不得於真主之外復添一枝贅，而旁驚其心志矣。不得更求一所從出而移易其堅確矣。不得復存一毫私意，參雜於其間，而濶亂其純粹也。
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Chapter Three: Epistemology¹⁴

<p>Theme: Any craft work must have a craftsman. The universe must require a Lord who has created it.</p> <p>Explanation: In the world there are many things. A palace is a huge building. A plate is a small container. These things are created by their makers. Without the house builder, there will be no house. Without the craftsman, there will be no cookware. The sky is clear and high above. The earth is solid and broad. Since the sun, moon, stars, mountains and rivers, living creatures and plants exist and they are abundant and plentiful, surely the creator Lord Ruler exists. Is it possible that the sky, earth, moon, stars, mountains and living plants form themselves? If one lives all the time under the sky and ignorant of a Lord Ruler in the sky, then one really does not know the sky. If one lives all the time on earth and is ignorant of the Lord Ruler on earth, then one really does not know earth. Every day one can see the sun, moon, stars, mountains and living plants and yet one does not know who the Lord Ruler is. Is that person proficient enough to investigate and seek the true knowledge of heaven and earth? He is not proficient to know the</p>	<p>擇要：工藝必有匠，大造必有主</p> <p>解：世間一器一物，大而宮室，纖而盤盂，莫不需匠作以成；未有舍匠作，而木質自能成屋，坯土自能成為器者。乃天如此其高明，地如此其博厚，日月星辰，山川動植，如此其照耀而充郁，豈無主宰以造化之，而天遂自成其為天，地遂自成為地，日月星辰，山川動植遂自成其為形象也？終日戴天，而不知天之有主宰，非真知天者也。終日履地，而不知地之有主宰，非真知地者也。終日見日月星辰，山川動植，不知其主宰之為誰</p>
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¹⁴ Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties*, 47-57.

<p>heaven and earth. How can he then know his own heart and see his own nature? Without investigating and seeking the principles of a thing, resulting in true knowledge and according to his human nature, he is not able to interact with people or things. How can he then exalt his virtue and realization? This is a very important question. Humankind should really need to know the Lord Ruler of the universe.¹⁵</p> <p>Theme: In the world, there are foolish, worthy and unworthy people. They all know the existence of the Lord Ruler. Whoever does not know him; he is then constrained in form and image and ends up in emptiness.</p> <p>Explanation: Although a person may be aware of the existence of God, he does not know God really. By his meaningless imagination, he creates false knowledge and erroneous feelings. The fools stick to their forms and images instead of the Lord Ruler. Thus, they regard humans and things as the Lord Ruler. The Daoists and Buddhists seek the Lord Ruler outwardly in forms and images. Therefore, these are people who regard emptiness as the Lord Ruler. There are numerous examples that end in failure.</p> <p>Theme: Some learners may seek Lao Zi.</p> <p>Explanation: Lao Zi lived in the Zhou Dynasty. His teaching exalted abstraction and mysticism. He used his power to prepare medicines for immortality. Lao Zi sought to be elusive and tried to lose any trace of</p>	<p>也,焉得通天徹地而稱為致知格物者乎?不能通天徹地,而又何以明心見性?不能致知格物,而又何以率性修道,則甚矣,人不可不知有主宰也!</p> <p>擇要: 天下智愚賢不肖,莫不知之. 第未識其真者,不泥於形相,即落於空無.</p> <p>解: 人知有主,而不識主之真,則憑空想象,邪知惡覺,從此起矣. 是故愚冥之輩,泥形而求焉,遂以人物為主者,有之矣,寂滅之流,外形象而求主焉,遂以空無為主者,有之矣. 過與不及之弊,不可勝數.</p> <p>擇要: 曰老</p> <p>解: 老子,周代楚國人也. 其學尚玄虛,用權術以自隱,無名為務,秦皇漢武好神仙,老子之教行. 因而後</p>
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¹⁵ An additional explanation of about 200 words was provided by Liu Zhi but not translated. At the end of the section, he emphasized expanding knowledge of every detail of things before any self cultivation.

<p>himself. The Qin emperor sought immortality and popularized Daoism. Later, people regarded Lao Zi as the Lord.</p> <p>Theme: Some learners may seek the Buddha.</p> <p>Explanation: Buddha lived in the Shakya Republic and was an Indian. He pioneered Buddhism and exalted emptiness and meaninglessness. He was keen on spirits and attempted to rescue humankind from hardship. He taught others to become another Buddha. Buddhism teaches that Buddha is the most exalted being in the world. All things depend on and can succeed because of Buddha's emptiness. Buddha came to China during the reign of Emperor Han Mingdi. Therefore, people in the East regard Buddha as their lord.</p> <p>Theme: Some may seek the heaven</p> <p>Explanation: Some may understand heaven as the principle and others the form. With regard to the principle, the heaven means humankind can understand its subtlety and yet is unable to grasp its irresistible power. With regard to the form, the heaven means one can look up and see various movements in the sky. According to the <i>Analects</i> of Confucius, the heaven is known as God. This heaven really means the principle. However, foolish people do not understand the meaning of heaven and they just use any form as the Lord Ruler.</p> <p>Theme: Concerning principle</p> <p>Explanation: Principle is to explain the necessity of</p>	<p>人以老子為主者。</p> <p>擇要：曰佛</p> <p>解：佛，身毒國人也。其教尚空寂，談鬼怪，以度眾生成佛為務，蓋謂天上地下，推佛獨尊，萬事萬物，皆緣佛妄想而成。漢明帝傳其傳入中國，因而東土人有以佛為主者。</p> <p>擇要：曰天</p> <p>解：天，有指理言者，有指象言者，指理而言，則人默識其妙，天且弗違者是也。指象而言，則人仰視其行，周旋運動者是也。儒者謂五經以上帝為天，指理而言也。庸愚者不識此天為何物，遂以形體之天為主矣。</p> <p>擇要：曰理</p> <p>解：理，物之所以然者。天</p>
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<p>things. Heaven has its principle, humans have their principle and materials have their principle. It is like the relation between the meaning of an essay and the text. In the ancient five Chinese <i>Analects</i>, there is absolutely no statement saying that God is the principle. The later scholars speculatively tried to work out the nature of God. They tried to know God from image form but in vain. When they gave up the image form, they had no foundation to know God. Thus, they said that God was the principle. They regarded that in this world, there was no exaltation higher than the principle. Thus, they gave the principle the name of God. This is not appropriate.</p> <p>Additional explanation: The principle relates to things and this relation is similar to the text and meaning of the text. This has been the ancient unchanging truth. Before you write, you need to form the meaning that becomes the central idea. When this meaning is written on paper, it becomes the story form with deciding content. No matter what the form or the content of this story is, there must be an author who firstly needs to determine the theme and work out the plot. He then develops it to become a story. No one should say that the central idea of the story is the author himself. The learner should understand the relation between the principle and its thing. This relation is similar to the meaning of the story and the way the text conveys the meaning. Should the learner understand such relation, he can avoid mistaking the principle as the author.</p> <p>Theme: He who seeks speculatively does not know the real Lord.</p>	<p>有天理, 人有人理, 物有物理. 理之與物, 蓋若意之與字也. 五經中, 絕未有謂上帝即理. 乃後之學者, 欲揣度上帝為何如, 泥相求之而無所得, 去相求之, 又無所歸, 遂以理當之. 蓋謂天下莫尊於理, 故以帝名之, 而不知其說猶屬未當也.</p> <p>原注: 理之於物, 若意之於字, 千古之喻也. 譬人欲作一文, 未書之時, 主意才立於心中, 此文之理也. 及書於方策, 則文之象也. 文之象, 固本於理, 然必有作文者, 為之主意, 而發揮之者也. 詎可謂意即即字之作者乎? 學者明夫理之於物, 即猶意之於字, 則無誤識矣.</p> <p>擇要: 擬度為主, 非真主也.</p>
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<p>Explanation: Lao Zi and Buddha are humans and they must be created. They could not escape life and death. Those who exalt them as lords are meaningless. Heaven is above the earth and both are created as a whole. Even if heaven merges with the earth, both are created and belong to the material world. Some fools call this the lord. The principle itself is an abstract concept that is embedded within the material world. The principle is not creative and it is ridiculous to call a principle the lord. Therefore, he who seeks to know the Lord speculatively does not know the Lord.¹⁶</p>	<p>解：老，佛，皆人也，造化所必受，生死所不免，而稱之為主，妄也。天與地對，乃造化中之一物，即其上下連屬，亦形而下之器，則稱之主，愚也。理屬虛意，寓於物而不能自為物，稱之為主，誤也。故曰：擬度為主，非真主也。</p>
<p>Theme: The true Lord is without any form and image but it is real. The Lord created heaven and earth, humankind. It is the Lord of the principles and vital energies of all things.</p>	<p>擇要：真主，則隱然無象，確然實有，造化天人，運行理氣者是也。</p>
<p>Explanation: The Lord is without form and image. It is impossible to see him in form and colour. If the Lord is real, it is impossible to seek him with abstraction and emptiness. Since the Lord is the creator, Lao Zi and Buddha are not lords at all. Since it is the Lord of principles and vital energies, the Lord can be understood by the process of analogy. Any scholar, who wants to know the Lord, must know its name and then the reality of the Lord.¹⁷</p>	<p>解：曰無象，則不可以形色求。曰實有，則不可以空無論。曰造化天人，則老，佛之謬可立除。曰運行理氣，則擬議之說可以立辨。學者凡欲切識真主，必先辨其名分，然後求其實體。</p>
<p>Theme: To know the Lord, you seek it heartily. This sets the seeker on a firm foundation. All deviations and incorrect views will not be able to confuse him.</p>	<p>擇要：惟知真主而趨向之，則根腳正定；紛紛異端，不得以邪說惑亂矣。</p>

¹⁶ An additional explanation in the form of a summary in about 90 words has not been translated.

¹⁷ An additional explanation of about 40 words has not been translated.

<p>Explanation: It is the Lord Ruler who gives me life; it also let me live. When I die, my life returns to the Lord Ruler. Thus, I can live in rest and peace without worry. If I live without knowing the Lord Ruler, what warrant do I have to return to the Real? Because of this, we should not be ignorant. It is serious that we need to know the Real.</p> <p>We know the Lord and seek it obediently. We understand it in our hearts. In situations that we cannot hear or see, we still solemnly exalt it with a fearful heart. It seems the Lord Ruler is very near and he watches quietly over us. Thus, our lives know it obediently. We need to be alert in our ritual relationship with the Lord Ruler who watches over us in all moments. Also, we must earnestly use our bodies to know it.</p> <p>If I am obedient daily, I am not far from the Lord Ruler. Every moment I am obedient, and then the Lord Ruler is not far from me. When I live, there is no separation between us. Will I be far from the Lord if I die with the compliance of the Lord's way? Even when I live or die, I do not separate from the Lord Ruler. This is the right way to deal with life and death. I thus become a person of belonging to the root and returning to the Lord.</p> <p>This is such an important idea that I really need to focus on it. Shall I spend my life and energy in meaninglessness? Is it worth it? Also, life is important</p>	<p>解：我之性命，皆主宰之所賦於者也。當我之生也，主宰以性命賦之於我，及其死也，我仍以性命歸之主宰，始得以寧無恙也。若生之日，不知有主宰，而死之日，又何以能歸之主宰乎？此知有主宰一著，為人生所必不可忽者也。</p> <p>知有主宰而趨向之，則根腳之際了然明白，不覩不聞之中凜乎主宰之陡降於前也，而其以性命趨向之者，至矣。瞻禮對越之間，凜乎主宰之鑒觀於上也，而其以身體趨向之者，切矣。</p> <p>日日趨向，則我不遠於主宰矣。刻刻趨向，則主宰亦不遠於我矣。生之日，如此相親相密；而死之日，又焉有不相符無間者乎？我之性命生死，不離於主宰，方是能了卻生死者，方是能歸根復命者。</p> <p>如此大事，不急急講求，而顧乃以有用精神虛度一生也，豈不可以深惜哉？</p>
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<p>that we should not waste time listening to heresies. Should our life be sorrowful and regretful?¹⁸</p> <p>Theme: When you see the movement of grass and trees, you sense the coming wind. When you see the budding of seeds, you know the coming of the spring. Examine your soul and you see there is life. Examine the transformation of the world. You know there is Lord Master. This is a necessary principle.</p> <p>In the last section, I have discussed the real and false principles, trying to prove the existence of the Lord Ruler Here I discuss the ways and methods to seek the Lord Ruler and give some evidences for the seeker. Some may think that it is difficult to know the Lord but it is not that difficult. There are two categories. Firstly, the form can see other forms. Secondly, the other is formless that can discern and know from the traits of things. Thus, in this world, all things can be known.</p> <p>For example, wind is without form and colour. Humankind cannot get and know its essence. When the grass and trees move, we sense the coming wind. Another example, spring does not occupy space. Humankind cannot capture or know its essence. However, when we can see the budding of the seed, we know that spring has come. These two examples are of outward phenomena. Soul is a thing inside us. It is</p>	<p>擇要：今夫見草木之偃仰而知有風；觀綠翠之萌動，而知有春；視己身之靈明，而知有姓，參天地之造化而知有主，必然之理也。</p> <p>解：前此乃明辨主宰有無真偽之理，此則導人求主之法，而使知主者有所據也。蓋真主之本然，無形色可見，無方位可求，而人欲識之，似乎難也，然而無難也。蓋凡天下之物，不出二端，有有形者，有無形者。有形者，以形色見之，無形色者，以踪跡推之，天下無不識之物矣。</p> <p>譬如風，無形無色者也。人不可以見其本然也。但見草木之偃仰，則知其為風矣。又如春，無方位者也，人不可得而見其本然也。但視綠翠之萌動，則知其為春矣。此二者，身外之物也。身內之物，如靈性，無形色，亦無</p>
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¹⁸ An appendix on the meaning of life in about 300 words has not been translated.

<p>without form and space and yet it follows us daily. We do not see the root suchness of our souls. However, based on my sight, hearing, language, movement, daily living, we are able to know that the nature of the souls.</p> <p>Looking at far away things and near things within us, we still cannot see many invisible things. While these things cannot be seen, we cannot cheat ourselves by saying that they are nothing. It is from their traits that we can discern that they exist. The Real Ruler exists in the universe, without form or colour. Naturally, humankind cannot see his root suchness. If we see the transformation of world, the movement of the sun and moon, the orderliness of such movement, the fitting distribution of creatures, the passing of centuries, time unchanging and life without ceasing and continuing to multiply, we can know that the Lord Ruler is quietly in control. To say there is nothing and no Lord is cheating.</p> <p>When the grass and trees move, the wind leaves its trait. When the seed starts budding, this is the sign of coming spring. The soul of humankind is the expression of his life function. The sign of the Lord Ruler's existence is revealed in the world's transformation and movement. Wind, spring and life are the transformation of the Lord Ruler. We cannot see the essences of wind, spring and life except their traits. Likewise, we can only know the traits of the Lord Ruler and do not see his root suchness.</p>	<p>方位者也。日與吾俱，吾不得見其本然為何如也。但即吾之視聽言動，食息起居。靈明活潑，而遂知其性矣。</p> <p>遠取諸物，近取諸身，皆有不可見之物。皆不可欺之以無者，以其有踪跡可推耳。真宰之於天地間也。雖無形色可見，無方位可求，人固不可視而見其本然也。然若視夫天地之造化，日明之運行，晝夜之舒卷，寒暑之代謝，以及種種安排，色色佈置，歷萬古而常然，恆生生而不息，則知必有主宰者默運其間，亦不可欺之以無者也。</p> <p>草木偃仰，風之踪跡也。綠翠萌動，春之踪跡也。人身之靈明活潑，性之踪跡也。天地造化循環，主宰之踪跡也。風與春與性，皆主宰所造之物也，人尚不可得見其本然，惟以踪跡識之，況造化之主宰，而能見其本然乎？亦即其造化之踪跡默而識之也。</p>
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<p>Theme: The root suchness of the Lord Ruler is hidden in function, seen in acts, subtle in principle and formed in image. Before his subtlety manifests, we cannot see the substance. After the manifestations, are not all materials signs of his root suchness?</p> <p>Explanation: This explains the reality of the real Lord so that seeker can find it. According to the real Lord's root suchness, it has substance, function and action. Its substance is hidden, quiet and difficult to be made known. The subtlety of its function is unpredictable. Its actions can scarcely be seen. Why is that? This is because the root suchness is hidden in function and seen in its action. The action of the true Lord is seen in the innate heaven and becomes the principle of all things. Its action is seen also in the acquired heaven and becomes the image of things.</p> <p>The substance and function of the Real Ruler cannot be felt by us but we can feel the principle and image which is not the Real Ruler but they are his action in the innate and acquired heaven. When you see the principle and image, you are seeing the act of God, aren't you? The action of the Real Ruler is nothing other than the manifestation. When you see his action, don't you see the function of the Lord also? The subtle function is the original power. When you see the function of the Lord, don't you see the root suchness? From the manifested phenomena, we can understand complex philosophy.</p>	<p>擇要：主宰之本然，隱於用，見於為，妙於理，形於象，妙用未顯，其體不可見也。妙用既顯，則萬事萬物孰非其本體之徵哉？</p> <p>解：此一節，乃明示真主之實，而明示真主之實，而俾求主者有所得也。蓋真主之本然，有體也，有用也，有為也，其體隱寂難知，其用微妙難測，其為則依稀可見矣。何者？真宰之本然，隱於用而見於為也。真主之為，有見於先天者，萬物之理是也，有見於後天者，萬物之象是也。</p> <p>真宰之體與用，似乎與吾不相及，而理與象則吾己身所見者也。夫理與象非他。即真主之為見於先後天者也。見現象真主之作為乎？夫作為無別，即真主妙用之顯應也，則作為不即見真主之妙用乎？夫妙用者，即真主本具之能事也。見妙用，不不幾見真主之本然乎？由著之隱，由顯之微，以漸而</p>
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<p>From what can be understood, we can see dimly the hidden subtlety. Gradually, our heart and spirit can engage properly. Therefore, things that may be difficult to explore can be grasped. Things that may be difficult to understand can be solved. Is this merely the problem of understanding and exploration? In reality, when we see all things, we also see the manifestations of the Lord's root suchness. Why should you bother to distinguish the substance, function and act of the real Lord? The subtle function of the Lord has already been manifested. We can see the real Lord every time and everywhere. Abdullah Ibn Umar once said: 'Let it be if we cannot see. While we can see, we see the real Lord. This is the meaning as explained.'</p> <p>Theme: Qur'an (41:53) says: 'I reveal my traits in all four corners and their locations of the world....How come that you cannot observe?'</p> <p>Explanation: This Qur'anic verse explains what has been said previously, namely, all things are signs of the Lord Master. This verse is the evidence and the Lord's subtle function is manifested. It is because humankind observes things superficially that we are not able to understand deeply. Therefore, there is a distance between the Real Ruler and humankind. To us, it seems the Real Ruler is hidden. We do not know that all things are manifestations of the Real Ruler and we should be able to see him. The Real Ruler is not far away and not hidden. It is humankind whose eyes are blind and ears are deaf. We ourselves are far from it and have hidden from the Lord.</p>	<p>心神契合，則難測者易測矣，難知者易知矣。豈惟知與測哉？一覩物而真主之本然直見，何分體用與為哉？但妙用未顯，其體不可見也。妙用既顯，隨處而見主矣。歐默爾先賢曰：不見物則已，見則見主。其是之謂與！</p> <p>擇要：經曰：‘將使汝見吾節，於諸方，暨爾諸身而爾故不觀？’</p> <p>解：此經言，乃引証前文之義，而實萬物即主宰之徵也。節，節文，即妙用之顯然者也。人惟察物不精，則見理不明，故其與主宰似乎有隔，其視主宰似乎有隱。而不知天地間無物而不是主宰之所顯，則無物不可見主宰；天地間無處不是主宰之所在，則無處不可得主宰。主宰未嘗隔也，亦未嘗隱也，惟人自聾，而自遠自</p>
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<p>The clever and astute people can observe the real Lord in anything. They ponder the principle and vital energy and know the hidden real Lord. They observe the day and night [ying and yang] and understand the endless great transformation. They then know the magnificence and exaltation of the real Lord. They look up to the sun and moon and can imagine the clairvoyance of the real Lord. They search ceaselessly the mountains and oceans and see his plentiful immanence and endless nurture in all. They see the mountains and rivers. Then they can experience the ever-flowing abundant grace of the real Lord. They watch the flowers and plants and can discover the wideness of his transformation. They observe the birds and animals and can see the universal love of the real Lord. They appraise the spirit and god and can know the wonder and omniscience of the real Lord. They observe the seasons and the weather and know the Lord's regulation of all natural cycles. They study the metabolism of creation and can know the Lord's control of the up and down of all things. All the true facts above are the manifestation of his subtle function and the lodging residence of the root suchness of the real Lord. Where materials exist, the real Lord is also present. Therefore, a text says: 'only when you are near to things, you are able to know the real Lord. What is the point of seeking the true Lord in a far place?'</p> <p>Theme: The holy sage says: 'understanding oneself is to understand the Lord.' That is, you need to understand yourself first before you understand the Lord.</p>	<p>贖,而自遠自蔽耳。</p> <p>聰明達士,觀物見主,參理氣以識其隱顯,察陰陽以明其變化,觀天地以見其清寧,仰日月以見明鑒,窮山海以見其藏育,臨江河以見其流沛,視草林以見其廣生,觀鳥獸以見其博愛,度鬼神以見其通靈,觀人才以識其妙知,宇宙候以知其循環,觀代謝以知其消息。凡若此者,無非真主妙用之所顯,即無非真主本然之所寓。物之所在,即主之所在也。故經有云:即物可以識主,何事遠求乎哉?</p> <p>擇要: 聖人曰: 明己則明主矣,是謂認主,先以認己,為要也</p>
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<p>Explanation: In the section above, from the things far way, you can see the proof of the Lord. Here in this section, the holy sage speaks from a nearer [with respect to humanity] perspective. You can know the reality of the real Lord. As your humanity is the microcosm, the nature of this person is also the Real Ruler. As you do not know the necessity of your root suchness, neither do you know the Real Ruler's root suchness. However, if you seek yourself and know the necessity of your nature, then even the necessity of the Real Ruler's root suchness is also known because it is not outside your nature.</p> <p>For humans to be human there are four conditions that should be needed. Humans have their root suchness, which is the true nature. They have their subtle function, which gives intellectual power. Also, they have innate ability to see, hear, speak and act. Finally, they can act creatively in art and craft writing.</p> <p>For the Real Ruler to be the Real Ruler, likewise there are four conditions that should be needed. The root suchness is the real substance. The subtle function is intellectual ability. Its root ability includes root seeing, hearing, speaking and acting. [Lastly], it has [splendid] acts. It governs the time of things by perpetual begetting and return. Thus, if you know the causal suchness of your substance and function, you also know the causal suchness of the Real Ruler. Is this a very appropriate comparison? This is the key meaning of the statement above that to know yourself is to know the Real Ruler.</p>	<p>解：前經言，乃遠取諸物可以見主之徵驗。聖人此言，則近取諸身，可以得主之實際也。蓋人之身，天地一小式耳；人之性即此身之主宰也。人惟不能自知本性之所以然，故不能知主宰之所以然也。若返求諸己，能識自己本性之所以然，則主宰之所以然，不外當身之本性，而得之矣。</p> <p>蓋人之所以為人者，大約四者盡之：有本然焉，真性是也；有妙用焉，知能是也；有本為焉，視聽言動是也；有作為焉，工藝書寫是也。</p> <p>主宰之所以為主宰者，亦四者盡之：有本然焉，真體之謂也；有妙用焉，亦知能之謂也；有本為焉，本聽，本觀，本言，本動是也；有作為焉，時行物生，周而復始是也。明夫自己體用之所以然，即知夫主宰之所以然矣。不至切近乎哉；此所以謂認己為主認之要訣也。</p>
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<p>True meaning: the meaning of the Lord Ruler is similar to the head in a family. The ruler is the highest position and received respect and reverence from the family members. He manages all family affairs and no one can supplant him. While the usual interpretation is of extreme exaltation, it is used because the Lord Ruler in reality holds sovereignty over certain things, similar to a landlord and an emperor. It is from this sovereignty that the name Lord Ruler originates. This Lord Ruler is one who holds sovereignty over others and the Lord Ruler is thus called.</p> <p>Our teaching believes that the transformation is concerned with the root suchness. The Lord is the convergence of both the world of image and principle. It governs the transformation. Nothing is more exalted than the Lord. Nothing can really describe him. It is similar to the lordship of the landlord and emperor. Based on this sovereign idea, it is then called the Lord. While the Lord is sovereign over creation, human sovereignty over other things cannot compare to it. Although the use of the word Lord may be similar, this usage is only a metaphor, using the metaphorical argument to illustrate the principle. The visible is metaphorical to the invisible. In reality, the two lords have basic qualitative difference.</p> <p>The Lord is prefixed by the word ‘real’. It is because the meaning of Lord is different to different people. The lord may mean that it may control one thing, one moment or even the ignorant may illegally occupy and control a location. There is no fixed rule to use the word lord. Such lordship is very different from the creator Lord.</p>	<p>實義：主之為名，似家之有長。居高處尊，為眾人之欽仰，萬事之總持，一家之中，莫能尚焉。故主之義，雖訓為極尊，而實則以掌握事物而名也。如地主，國主之類，皆取諸此。蓋以人之有掌握事物之柄，適似於主，而具主之義，即以主名之。</p> <p>乃吾教以大造之本然，在天地間，為理象之總會，萬化之綱維，舉天地之所有莫能逾其尊焉，其義無可得名，而以似於國之有主，因以主名之。則主者，特假是事以名是理，雖因其掌握事物之名，而非若人掌握事物之可比；雖與世人所用主字義略同，而以事喻理，以有形喻無形，所喻在於言外，其義則異。</p> <p>嘗又系以‘真’字，曰‘真主’。蓋因人之稱主者不一，或掌握一物，或操權一時，或蒙昧僭稱於一處，沒則已焉。非若大造之主，總理象</p>
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<p>The Lord thoroughly controls the world of image and principle, from beginning to now, without any disorder. This is the real Lord. Some people may misunderstand this meaning. They think that the creator Lord is the same as the emperor. They give the Lord a visible image. Most important, the real Lord means that it is the creator of all things and this is to show the meaning of Lord. Any seeker needs to know the meaning. He should not stop and try to seek the visible image of the Lord.</p> <p>Additional Explanation: Zhu Xi says that ‘according to the <i>Analects</i>, in the universe, there is a heaven Lord.... He is known as the principle.¹⁹ He also says that the magnificent Lord bestows grace upon humankind.’ The will of the heavenly Lord predetermines the blessings and disasters of humankind. This proves the existence of the Lord Ruler. Someone asks: ‘While we call the Lord Ruler by the name of the heaven Lord, who is this Lord Ruler?’ Zhu Xi answers, ‘the Lord Ruler exists naturally. Since the sky is solid and strong material and moves endlessly, then there must be a Lord Ruler who causes the natural movement of the sky.’ He also says ‘... Today, people call the heaven Lord by the name of Lord Ruler who is without form. This is not an appropriate way. Even worse, some people in society call the Lord Ruler by the name of the mythical emperor.’</p>	<p>而無遠遺，互終古而不易，是乃為真主也。今人不達借喻之名，乃以天地之主，亦擬於國家之主，則似有掌握之像矣。要不過托義以明理耳。求道之士，當意會其實，毋滯於像可也。</p> <p>朱紫陽曰：據詩書所說，便是真有個上帝，憑的分付，如帝震怒。然這個只是理如此。天下莫尊於理，故以帝名之。又曰：惟皇上帝，降衷於下民，天道福善禍淫，便自分明有個主宰相似。或問：以主宰謂之帝。孰為主宰？朱子曰：自有主宰。蓋天是個至剛至陽之物，自然如此遠轉不息。所以如此，必有為之主宰者。又曰：高宗夢帝賁良弼，必是夢中有帝賁之。不得說無此事。只是天理，亦不得。又曰：高宗夢傳說。據此，則是真有個天帝，與高宗對，曰吾賁汝以良弼。今人但以主宰說帝，謂無形容，恐也不得。若</p>
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¹⁹ This is a detailed historical data section and translation is only for the section on Zhu Xi. About 300 words are not translated.

My humble view: God as interpreted in the *Analects* as the heavenly Lord is similar to Islam that calls God by the name of Lord Ruler. Look at the ancient historical records about the Five Emperors and Three Kings. They had a piety for God and were sincere. The historical books record that God is called the heavenly Lord, other example like, royal heaven, vast heaven, heavenly will, and heavenly wrath and so on. Here, we talk about heaven. It means God and does not mean the massive and visible sky. The historical record does not explain the reason of naming the heaven as God. From the time of Confucius and Mencius, it is common to name God as heaven and not sovereign emperor. Fools do not know the profound meaning and consider the heaven as the visible sky. Other people may also become speculative. They create many unfounded theories. Therefore, many deviations begin to creep in..... As mentioned by Zhu Xi. He says, 'Heaven is used to describe the Lord Ruler that transforms all things. This heaven is known as the principle. There is nothing in the world that is nobler than the principle. Thus, the principle is called [heaven] emperor.' He also says, 'this principle is a pure, inclusive and abstract concept. It cannot create. Through movements, the vital energy can attend to and cohere to form many things.....' According to the above three arguments, sometimes it is due to the principle, or sometimes due to the vital energy or sometimes due to no principle or vital energy. Therefore, if someone asks about the truth of return, which way should they go?

世間所謂玉皇大帝，恐亦不可。

愚按：詩書之言上帝，亦猶吾清真之言主宰也。視其五帝三王，敬畏上帝之心，亦既誠懇矣。學又以天字呼之，如皇天，昊天，天命，天怒之類，蓋云天即帝也，非指蒼蒼形體之天為言也。然未詳言帝之所以為帝也。自孔孟而降，不云帝，而但云天。庸愚者，不達至理，滯於有象之天。聰明者，頓起疑思，鑿為無稽之論。斯異端之所以乘隙而入也。迄未程伊川傳易，曰：‘帝者，天之主宰也，以形體謂之天，以主宰謂之帝。’則其理曉然明暢矣。然又未即導人於一定無疑之鄉，而反示人以游移恍惚之路者，是尚未見吾教認主經書，無徵不信，故有此疑案未決耳。如朱子之言曰：‘天之所以主宰萬化者，理而已。天下莫尊於理，故以帝名之。’又曰：‘若理，則是潔淨空闊的世界。他卻不會造作。氣則能釀凝聚生

<p>What evidence can they get in order to get back to the root and return to the mandate? Or rather than answering the question, let the heretics speak. They then become popular day by day. Should they be allowed to be unceasingly popular? The older generation Confucian followers say, ‘the evil of the heretics makes it impossible to explain the way.’ I consider that the damage of the heresies is to stop the explanation of the way. Those who study the ancient texts, they understand the way. It is due to the words of the ancient emperors and the holy worthies. In this way, the deviation can be eliminated. As a result, the way of Islam can be clear and exposed.</p>	<p>物也.’又曰：‘高宗夢帝賁良弼，必是有帝賁之。不可說無此事。若然所謂玉皇大帝，亦不可。只是天理亦不得.’按此三條，倏而歸之理，倏而歸之氣。又倏而歸之非理非氣，將令問道尋源之士，果孰以而歸之乎？果何所依據，而以為盡性復命之響往乎？抑可不必講求，縱令異端邪說，日肆蔓延，而流弊於無窮乎？先儒曰：道之不明，異端害之也。予曰：異端之害，由正學之不明也。考古經，明正學，折衷於帝賢之言，斯異端可息矣，清真之理可明矣。</p>
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Chapter Four: Meaning and Witness²⁰

<p>Prologue: Meaning is to know exhaustibly the principle and examine all things. Witness²¹ is to explore the mystery and explain the meaning. In Islam, the ‘meaning and witness’ is a method for the heart to pass on knowledge. This is a unique and singular way to know the Real Ruler. This chapter consists of five subchapters.</p> <p>Subchapter One Theme: I testify there is no god except</p>	<p>小序：窮理審物之謂諦，發微彰義之謂諦言。諦言者，聖教傳心之法，所以認識真宰，止一無二之明證也。言凡五章。</p> <p>擇要：我證一切非主，惟有</p>
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²⁰ Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties*, 58-61.

²¹ Alternative translation: Testification.

<p>one, not two, God. It is the only real Lord. I testify the prophet Muhammad is the messenger sent by the Lord.</p> <p>Explanation: The witness is to prove the reality of the real Lord and to know the root suchness of the real Lord. My witness is to use the self as proof without seeking any proof from outside the self. The fact is that the human self is composed of body and nature. That may be the body proof or may be the nature proof or may be the unified body nature proof. These may be sufficient to prove the real principle of the real Lord.</p> <p>What does the body prove? The body of humanity has form and also invisible nature. The body including the inner hundreds of body parts is the visible part of nature. Vision, hearing, speech and movements are deeds under the control of nature. Nature enables the body to act and generate senses. This is sufficient to prove that the heaven and earth and ten thousand things do not have any self-government. They are all determined by the Real Lord and Ruler.</p> <p>What does nature prove? Nature is invisible and it fully fills the person. Through the heart, the self can understand his nature and also the eyes can see. The thinking can perceive and see his nature but the ears cannot do so. Nevertheless, you have not heard any difficulty in working out the form of nature, resulting in a nature that is uncertain and wavering. From this argument, the real Lord has invisible originality. However, he embraces all forms of visible things and yet</p>	<p>真主, 止一, 無二. 我證穆罕默德, 是主差使.</p> <p>解: 證者, 參證真主, 而識其本然也. 我證者, 即我之當體求證, 而不遠假乎外物也. 夫我之為我. 不過身與性二者而已. 或即我之身證, 或即我之性證, 或即我之身性統體證, 皆足以明真主至實之理也.</p> <p>以身證何? 身, 有形者也, 必有一無形之性. 四肢百體, 無非一性之顯露; 視聽言動, 無非一性之施為. 未有無性, 而身自能運行知覺者也. 以此足證天地萬物皆不能自主, 必有真主主宰乎其間也.</p> <p>以性證何? 性, 無形者也, 充周一身之中, 心可以得而明, 目不可得而見, 神不可得而會, 耳不可得而聞. 然吾未見有人焉, 疑擬其形狀, 恍惚其有無也. 以此足證真主本自無形, 而包貫一切有形, 而卒不可以言思擬</p>
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<p>you cannot use word, concept, analogy and debate to seek him.</p> <p>What do both body and nature prove? Within the body, there are visible, invisible components and also the movement and stillness of the whole body. This is ultimately due to nature. Humankind cannot continue its bodily function without its nature. Also, you cannot see nature outside the body. It is because nature comes first and then the body can function. Nature manifests through the function of the body. This is enough to prove that within this heaven and earth and ten thousand things, visible things and invisible spirit have their origin, namely, the one and real Lord. It is absolutely not that beside the real Lord there is a gap that can hold heaven and earth and ten thousand things. Also, they are not inside the Lord's root suchness that contains all these things. The subtle unity between the real Lord and all things is a mysterious principle similar to the union of heaven and humanity. It is not easy to explain. However, you may understand the mystery from both the body and nature. While it cannot be seen and heard, it can be completely heard and seen with body and nature. Originally, it is beyond our limits and without colour and form. Yet you can see the encompassing and flowing of substance and function. These are clearly revealed. This is the meaning of personal proof. You may seek proof external to the self. Can that external proof be as clear?</p> <p>Explanation: The [ultimate] sage is also another proof²². He further explains and expounds what is said above.</p>	<p>議求也。</p> <p>以身性統體證何？合有形無形，一切表裡動靜，總原一性，不得於性外求身，亦不能於身外見性。由性有身，即身見性，以此足證天地萬物一切有無色妙，總原一主。非真主本然之外，更有傍隙，可安頓天地萬物；亦非真主本然之中，容有一閑竅，可藏納天地萬物也。則是主物同然之妙，天人合一之幾，不可得而名言者，皆於當體身性中名言之矣。本不可睹不可聞者，皆於不睹不聞中，盡睹之，盡聞之矣。本無方所，本無形色者，皆於一切方所，一切形色中，直見其體用流貫，昭著顯現矣。此即我證主之義也。彼夫外當身而求主，寧能如是明切乎哉？</p> <p>至於證聖之義，則又不過即其所以證主者，而推廣言之</p>
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²² Although the text does not clearly indicate the sage is the prophet Muhammad, the subchapter titles clearly indicates the concerned sage is the prophet Muhammad.

<p>The real Lord is invisible and controls the transformation in the innate heaven. The holy sage is the visible vicegerent of ten thousand things in the acquired heavenly realm. It is impossible for the invisible Lord to make any description to humankind but the visible sage can explain it. Therefore, you are able to understand the difficult truth that is impossible to understand otherwise.</p> <p>Imitate that which is visible and follow the way of the sage. Then, you can reach the realm that is conceived to be impossible to reach. The holy sage is indeed human but he is the representative of the way and also manifests the way. The real Lord is the origin of the holy way. Therefore, testifying to the sage is to testify to the Lord. If you testify thoroughly to the end, you also testify to the deeper mystery of the Lord. You can speak of two testimonies, one to the Lord and the other to the sage. In reality, it belongs to the same principle.</p> <p>Translation: Witnessing the word and understanding the text of the Lord have a single core idea. It has two words, namely, ‘not two’, only one single idea. The seeker who works hard needs to witness the reality of ‘not two.’ Such work completes the whole of witness. It is because the beginning and end of the heaven and earth, [that is] all things are operating intricately and that is merely the real Lord’s manifestation of his subtle function. Such manifestation of the function and the subtle function of root suchness are different and yet not separable. They have different categories and are known by different names. Both of them eventually return to the one Lord. Those who are foolish and confused are not able to understand. They hold on to their own senses,</p>	<p>耳。蓋真主者，先天地掌握萬化而無形者也；聖人者，後天地代理萬物而有形者也。無形者，無可名，即聖人而名之，斯可以明其不可明之理。</p> <p>有形者，始可法，即聖道而行之，乃可到其不可到之位。蓋聖人，人也，即道也，即道之顯象也。道原於主，故證聖即所以證主也。證聖到盡頭處，即證主到微妙處也。分言之，雖有兩事，而其實祇一理也。</p> <p>證主言，通章竅妙，只在‘無貳二’字。用功之人，必證到‘無貳’之實，亦必造到‘無貳’之位，方成為證主之全功。蓋天地人物，生化錯出，其實不過真主妙用之顯然耳。妙用之顯然與妙用之本然原不即不離，但品第既別，則名分不同，而究竟歸終，惟是一主。乃愚迷之徒，不達此義，執著我相，謬於主外求物，物外求主，既以幻化而為真常，又安識</p>
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<p>erroneously exploring things beyond the real Lord. They are mistaken to hold firm to images. They are wrong to seek the real Lord from the created things that are outside the Lord or to seek it from the outside of the created things. Then, they conclude that the transformation of all things is a constancy of reality. How can they understand the subtle truth of the return to the real Lord? It is no wonder that many have not understood and are doubtful of the ‘not two’. It is really disheartening!</p> <p>Subchapter Two Theme: All things are not the Lord, there is only the real Lord; Muhammad is the Lord’s messenger.</p> <p>Explanation: The witness, namely <i>Shahada</i>, is to do without the need of the proof of trace. There exists one Real Ruler. It is without boundary and has no body. However, the seeker can examine self and then he can witness the Lord, resulting in the meeting of the human with the heaven. The method is unavoidably based on the trait, namely, human self. The human self is not antithetical to the Real Ruler.</p> <p>Explanation (continued): This chapter does not have to do with any proof by word nor with the existence of one Real Ruler. In its undifferentiated heavenly principle, it transforms and leaves traces. All things that have names are embedded in the unnamed. Thus, those named things are really unnamed things. All things that belong to the acquired heaven are undifferentiated in the innate heaven. Hence, the acquired heaven is also the innate</p>	<p>化壑歸真之妙道乎？無怪乎落於疑貳者之多也，悲哉！</p> <p>擇要：一切非主，惟有真主；穆罕默德，是主欽差</p> <p>解：清真言者，去其作證之迹，惟存一主宰也。主宰無方無體，求道者能於當體求證焉，夫亦可謂盡人見天之會矣，而未免有作證之迹也，己身與主宰猶未免有對待之痕也。</p> <p>此章不用作證文語，惟存一主宰，則渾然天理，而化乎對待之痕矣。凡有可名，皆包藏於無名之內，則可名亦無名也。凡屬後天者，皆渾入於先天之中，則後天即先天也。可名與無名，不分界</p>
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<p>heaven. Named things and unnamed things do not have boundaries. The innate and acquired heaven have no difference. Because of this, what is the point in insisting on proof? If the seeker can know this realm of understanding, then, he has reached the highest end point of exploring the Real Ruler. There is no knowledge that the seeker cannot get!</p> <p>Subchapter Three Theme: I believe in the Lord's root suchness [no beginning and original existence]. The subtle function reveals its exalted name. I confess that the real Lord reveals all laws.</p> <p>Explanation: To summarise the meaning of witness, it concerns the subtlety of the Lord's substance and function. The real Lord's original substance has no trace; in the beginning it has no name. When the function manifests, his exalted name is then revealed. As an illustration, the real Lord sees, hears, knows and empowers all things, begetting and transforming. These are due to the principle of root suchness and the name of subtle function. When the subtle function is not manifested, the principle is concealed. When his subtle function manifests, the principle is then revealed. Therefore, there is no place or thing that does not exhibit the trace of the Lord's root suchness and subtle function. Those who are not focused to examine, do not understand this fact in their heart.</p> <p>After witness then you can know un-differentiation and transformation. Because of this, the complete substance and great function of the real Lord are revealed thoroughly in the human self who seeks witness. If the</p>	<p>限; 後天與先天, 無有彼此. 又何必存作證之者也哉? 求道者誠能知有此境, 則體勘已到盡頭, 又何認識之有未至耶!</p> <p>擇要: 我信主本然, 以其妙用尊名; 我承主一切法則.</p> <p>解: 總信者, 統言體用之妙也. 本體無朕, 初無可名, 用顯而名著焉. 如觀聽知能, 生化予奪, 皆本然之理, 即妙用之名也. 妙用未顯, 理無不蘊; 妙用既顯, 理無不彰. 故無處無物, 不有本然妙用之迹. 人惟不曾會心研究, 故中有不明耳.</p> <p>夫既由作證, 而至於渾化則全體大用靡不備見於當體矣. 求之也真, 斯得之也實,</p>
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<p>seeker is sincere, the result will certainly be real. Once you have the certain reality, you accept and obey all the laws of the real Lord. Naturally, you do not relax yourself and withhold progress. Therefore, you seek to unify with the substance and function [of the real Lord], faithfully obey the Lord, wholly practise the Lord's law and work them out.</p> <p>Subchapter Four Theme: I believe in the real Lord. I believe in all heavenly spirits, and the sacred texts. I believe in the holy sages and the afterlife. I believe in the predestination of good and evil, that humankind has the choice of good and evil and believe in resurrection of life after death.</p> <p>Explanation: the particulars of faith express specifically the subtlety of function and action.²³ The Lord Ruler transforms all things. The highest of all is the spirit and sage. The sacred text is to teach humankind, distinguishing right and wrong, confirming good and evil. The Lord transforms the visible world which is this life. It also arranges the life after. Once there is life after, there will be return. You can clearly know and understand the subtlety of the real Lord as if it manifests clearly before you. Then, you can unceasingly and anywhere meet with the Lord. Likewise, you can unite unceasingly and anywhere with the substance and function of the Lord Ruler.</p> <p>Subchapter Five Theme: the real Lord is lofty! All</p>	<p>得之也實，則其承領之也，自不能已，夫是以合體用而篤契之，總其一切法則而實踐之矣。</p> <p>擇要：我信真主；信一切天神；信一切經書；信一切聖人；信後世；信善惡有定，自主：信死復生。</p> <p>解：分信者，專言功用之妙也。主宰之造化萬物也。其大者，則有神聖；其告戒下民也，則有經典；其是非分明之不爽也，則有善惡一定；其有明而不能無幽也，則有後世；有後世，則有死後復生。誠能認識親切，使一切功用之妙，歷歷如在目前。斯無時無地不與主宰相晤對，而亦時無地不渾入於主宰之體用中矣。</p> <p>擇要：清哉真主！世贊歸</p>
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²³ Frankel, thesis, 367.

<p>praises belong to the Lord. Ten thousand things are not the lord, but only the real Lord. The Lord is greatest. We are powerless and dependent on the exalted Lord.</p> <p>Explanation: The big praise is the ultimate act of witness.²⁴ Such witness is at the realm of true reality. You believe and obtain the complete substance and function [of the Lord]. This means your endeavour is pure; your heart is focused; not external to the Real Ruler and able to see again one thing. Not external to the Real Ruler, your heart has one thought. Then, when you see with your eyes, you can see the Lord. When your heart desires, you desire the Lord. When this happens, you should not hold on to your cleverness and ability. You should un-differentiate and yourself transform into the subtlety of the root suchness. There is no need to say praises external to the whole substance and great function of the Real Ruler, is there?</p> <p>A humble conclusion: These five subchapters are really one chapter; five contents, but really one content. The five chapters have their titles. This is to show clearly the development of content. The previous chapter gives a hint of the following chapter and the subsequent chapter supplements the content of the previous chapter. The order is not to be reversed, added or subtracted. If the learner is serious about knowing, then he can reap the reward. Learners can continue to discover from each chapter, the more they study, the more they are impressed.</p>	<p>主。萬物非主，惟有真主。真主至大！無時無力，惟以尊主。</p> <p>解：大贊者，總證信之極致也。夫證主而至於真實之境，信主而得其體用之全，則功夫純粹，心胸專一，不復於主宰之外，重見一物，不復於主宰之外，更存一念。夫是以目之所視，惟有主也；心之所及，惟有主也。此時，自己一段聰明才力，皆無可恃，惟渾融自化於本然之妙而已。又何必於全體大用之外，復為多詞以贊之耶？</p> <p>愚接：五章，一章也；五義，一義也。分章別名，明次第也。前章起後章，後義完全義，顛倒不得，增減不得。學者誠能現索而有得焉，其義有愈進而愈深者也。</p>
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²⁴ This is the corporate celebration among Muslims who memorize the *Shahadah* vocally at the end of Ramadan.

Chapter Five: Five Endeavours²⁵

<p>The five endeavours are the way of cultivation, realizing the rule of uniting humanity with the heaven. The first endeavour is the witness of <i>Shahadah</i>; the second ritual prayer; the third fasting; the fourth alms-tax and the fifth pilgrimage. All five endeavours are the Lord's commands. The holy sage has shown himself as the example to all others.</p>	<p>五功者。修道之方。盡人合天之法也。一曰念真功。二曰禮真功。三曰齋戒功。四曰捐課功。五曰朝覲功。五者皆主命。而聖人作則，以示眾人者也</p>
<p>Prologue: When the humans begin to form within the mother's body, the way of heaven is hidden. Then, the vital energy grows daily but real truth grows dim. Both reality and falsehood grow daily and yet human nature becomes insensitive. The understanding has become obscure and purity is contaminated. The way is then blocked. Humans do not know the way of return. The five endeavours of Islam, namely witness, ritual prayer, fasting, alms-tax and pilgrimage, are the ways of cultivation and return to human origin.</p>	<p>擇要：形器既章，天道隱矣。氣稟日生，真理晦矣。情偽日出，本性昏矣。明者蔽，純者雜，而通者塞矣。人於天命根原，罔知所自而返焉。聖教五功。念禮齋課朝。示人修道而返乎其初也。</p>
<p>Explanation: The way of heaven works harmoniously with the human heart. The Lord gives one principle to humanity but each human receives the principle differently. Thus, there is a difference between the sage and ordinary humans. The holy sage uses the way to explain things [the physical images] and he understands clearly the truth. The ordinary humans use things [physical images] to explain the formation of things and the truth is concealed. How can humans understand? How can humans return to their origin? Then, the real</p>	<p>解：天道人心，妙合而通也。真主以一理賦物，而人之稟受不同，故有聖凡之別。聖人以道道物，則道無不明。凡人以物物道，則道有所蔽，道有所蔽，何能循其理，以還復其本初耶？因是，主命五功，示人修道之方，開蔽通塞，指其來路，導之歸</p>

²⁵ Liu Zhi, *Rules and Proprieties*, 62-74.

<p>Lord gives the five endeavours. This is the way of cultivation, clearing the blockage, pointing out the way and guiding the path of return.</p> <p>Why are there five endeavours? It is because the heart and nature of humanity are interconnected, similar to a lock and key. Ears, eyes, mouth, nose and body are affected by sound, colour, taste, smell and movement, respectively. These [physical images/ perception] may cause love and hatred toward fleshly feelings. Such feelings are like the spring of a lock, which triggers the lock, making perfect and faultless the union between the heart and nature. If you use the key to open the lock, the spring of the lock is released and thus the union is separated. The five senses of feelings, namely sound, colour, taste, smell and movement are a burden and constrain humanity. Thus, five different methods are needed and they gradually can remove the burden. Human nature can be then manifested and the way [of cultivation] is clear. Thus, the five endeavours are necessary for cultivation.</p>	<p>焉。</p> <p>功以五者何？蓋人之心性相偕，如鎖鑰然，耳，目，口，鼻，身，受聲，色，味，臭，觸五者之染，遂生愛惡。五者，私欲之簧。（詳見五功義）簧鑰交締，牢莫可解。必按鑰製匙，緊緊恰合，不差絲秒，以啟拆之，則簧與鑰脫然解矣。夫人一身有五者之累，必以五法對治之。其累乃可漸釋。其累既釋，則性於斯見。而道於斯明矣。此五法所以為修道之切要也。’</p>
<p>Theme: Witness is to know clearly the return.</p> <p>Explanation: While humans may desire cultivating the way, they may not know the method and end in failure. Witnessing the Lord directs the heart to return and does not let the heart linger on aimlessly. Know that the real Lord is the origin of the great transformation and all mandates are derived from it. Anyone who desires to return to the mandate must then follow the real Lord as the reliable guide, achieving the return by constraining the body and heart. If humans give witness to other</p>	<p>擇要：念，知所歸也</p> <p>解：世人雖有意修道，而苦於不知其法，是以無成功也。念主，則心有所歸，而不致流蕩忘返。蓋真主為大化根原，萬命所自出。凡欲返本命之初，務以真主為準嚮，斯得所要歸，而身心俱有收束矣。若不知念此，而</p>

<p>things, they fail both this life and the afterlife and are beyond any cure. How can it be possible for such humans to hope for any success?</p> <p>Theme: Ritual prayer is to practise the way of return</p> <p>Explanation: If humans desire to practise the way, they must first know the way. They can then speedily and directly arrive at the destination. Otherwise, they may divert to another way and have no chance of arriving at the destination at all. It should be noted that the Lord gives life at the beginning. Humans pass from the foetus stage to adulthood and their experiences are different. By such different experiences, humans are further away from their beginnings. More experiences mean further away, making a return to the beginnings more difficult. Humans have passed through various stations, one after another. Is it possible for humans to return just by one step? Propriety means humans walking through their previous experiences, making their way back to the start. Since the Lord has given humans lives, so they can step by step, station by station, experience their lives. Thus, humans can now return to the mandate of the Lord station after station. This is the meaning of propriety.²⁶</p> <p>Theme: Fasting is to abstain from material things.</p> <p>Explanation: Humans desire material things and that may constrain humanity. Humans cannot easily give up</p>	<p>他有所念，則今生後世既皆失腳，莫可藥救，仍望成功，何可得也。</p> <p>擇要：禮。踐所歸之路也。</p> <p>解：凡人欲行道。必先識路程，而後可長驅以往。不然，則歧途異同，終無到日也。蓋人自主命之初，歷胎胞以迄於成人，其中所歷之境不一。多歷一境，即與本來之地多遠一層，愈歷愈遠，故其歸根復命，難而又難。當日郵遞而來，今日豈能一蹴而返？禮拜者，踐其原來所歷之境，而步步次以返之也。當日自主命步步郵遞以至於今生，今日即由此生步步郵遞以復歸於主命，此禮拜之至義也。</p> <p>擇要：齋。以絕物也</p> <p>解：人牽物欲，而不能遽絕者，以其有所求也。齋者，絕</p>
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²⁶ Then, Liu Zhi provided further a broader meaning of proprieties in about 500 words. This section is not translated.

<p>this desire because they need such materials. Fasting is to abstain from the need for materials. Human nature is originally good but the desire for materials means constraint. Constraint results in the unavoidable need for materials. Fasting is the endeavour of abstinence from materials. Through the exercise of abstinence, humans have no desires for materials. Abstinence from materials means that human nature is not interfered with and thus nature can return to the Lord without any second thought.</p>	<p>其所求之義也。蓋性本無為，而拘於氣質，則有為。有為，則不能不求於物。齋，用無為之功，而效無求之法也。無求於物，自能絕物。絕物而無擾於性，則本性復，而不二於主矣。’</p>
<p>Theme: Alms-tax is to sacrifice human selfishness.</p>	<p>擇要：課。以亡己也</p>
<p>Explanation: Humans do not align with the way [of the Lord] because of their self-centredness. The endeavour of the alms-tax is in practical terms the giving up of personal possessions. In reality, it is the self that needs to be given up. Humans may possess many things but it is money that means the most. While you may not know how to give up the self, alms-tax is indeed the giving up of the self. To give alms means the self is to die. When you are dead, you are suitable to unite with the way of the Lord. Thus, if you are seeking the way, outwardly you are dead to material things. Inwardly, you are also dead to the self. Hence, strings of desires completely disappear. Contaminated things are then purified. You no longer need to seek the way diligently because the way unconsciously undifferentiates with you subtly.</p>	<p>解：人所以不能合道者，只因有己。事事都從己上起見，便與道不合。輸課一條，其事在於捨財，而其意在於捨己。事之屬己者不一。而惟財是己之所最著意者。己無從捨，捨財即捨己也。捨己，則己亡矣。己亡，則無適而不與道合矣。故求道之士，外亡諸物，內亡諸己。則繫戀之念全消，沾染之事悉化，不必刻意求道，而道自不覺其渾融妙合矣。</p>
<p>Selected key theme: Pilgrimage means the return to the Real.</p>	<p>擇要：朝。復命而歸真也</p>
<p>Explanation: The more you desire to stay in your home,</p>	<p>解：人惟懷土之念深，則契</p>

the less you long for the way. The Lord commands pilgrimage and wants you to give up your selfish desires, be on the way and near the origin. Pilgrims give up their love for their home. They travel precariously and then arrive at their destination. Therefore, those who seek cultivation need to give up their self, practise asceticism and eventually arrive at the Real. This is to use visible practice to reveal the meaning of the invisible pilgrimage.

Theme: The cultivation of these five endeavours is to end the way of the acquired heaven.

Translation: These five endeavours are the method of cultivating of the way and keeping humans close [to the Real]. This way embraces heaven and earth. It reveals concealment. Nothing can exist outside the way. Also, humans cannot exist without the way. The way transforms all things and all things return back to the way. If humans come from the transformation of the way and cannot return to the way, does it mean that the way is far away from humans? No, it is humans who are distant from the way. Humans can use these endeavours to cultivate the way. Frequent witness enables human return. Frequent ritual prayer enables humans to know the journey. Fasting enables humans to give up materials and directs them to the way. Alms-tax is the giving up of the human self and to control their own self. Pilgrimage means that humans are to move from far to near, from outward to inward and return to their place in the original substance. Outward pilgrimage means that humans still leave behind their walking trace, but inward

道之念淺。命朝覲者，使絕欲登途，去其貪戀，以近本原也。夫朝覲之人，割愛離家，崎嶇跋涉，而後得詣其境，則凡修道之人，亦必克去己私，勸修苦行，而後得還其真。此又借有形之朝覲，以啟無形之朝覲之義也。

擇要：修此。而後天道盡

解：以此五者，為修道之功，則違道不遠矣。夫道者，廓天地，折微芒，物無不具，人無不全，萬化之所由出，亦萬化之所由歸也。出之於此，而不能歸之於此，豈道之遠人哉？亦人自遠於道耳。人能依此五者而修之，常念則得所歸矣，常禮拜則明所歸之路矣。齋，則絕物而向於道矣。課，則捨己而無自用之私矣。朝，則自遠之近，自外之內，而復歸於本體洞然之位矣。外之所朝，猶存趨蹌之跡。而內之所朝，渾然與真宰之體為一矣。修道之功，豈復有過於

<p>pilgrimage means to be undifferentiated and be one with the Real Ruler. This is the purpose of cultivating the way. Is there any purpose more superior to this?</p> <p>Theme: Witness is to set your heart to the Real Ruler. Witness can be heart (unspoken) and mouth (spoken) witness.</p> <p>Explanation: Heart witness means single-mindedly thinking of and remembering the Lord, as if you are returning to your origin. It is inaudible and invisible also. Mouth witness means adoration and praise, not forgetting the Real Ruler has no beginning. This has form and is audible. When the mouth praises, the heart must go along with it. Such prayer is not superficial and able to enlighten the mind. It can generate a heart sincere to the Lord. The ritual law requires mouth witness. To be close to the Real Ruler, you need heart witness. Therefore, witness is the first step towards realization.</p> <p>Theme: The mouth witness has a set time but heart witness does not have a fixed time.</p> <p>Explanation: Mouth witness has form and sound but form and sound are disturbing. Say for example, you cannot do mouth witness when you are busy and not free. However, heart witness is invisible and inaudible. Form and voice are not a hindrance to heart witness. Another example, when you hear and see movement, eat and work, you can still single-mindedly focus on the Lord and dare not forget him. In this way, you always remember the Lord. There is really no set time to regulate your remembrance of the Lord. Thus, there is no</p>	<p>此者哉?</p> <p>擇要：念者，心乎主宰之謂也。有心念，有口念。</p> <p>解：心念者，聚精會神，以致於本原之地。此無形無聲之念也。口念者，稱揚讚頌，以不忘無始之真。此有形有聲之念也。口之所至，必須心至，其念始不落於虛浮。心之所至，必須口至，亦足以殫心而生其誠敬也。禮法在口念，敬主在心，故念一功，為修道之首務也。</p> <p>擇要：心念以時，心念無時。</p> <p>解：口念，為有形有聲之念，而形聲足以礙之。如與物接，不得暇則不念，故曰以時也。心念為無形無聲之念，則形聲不得而礙之。如視聽言動，起居食息之頃，一心專注於主，不敢暫忘，則亦何時是念，而亦何時非念，故曰無時也。雖然，是亦</p>
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<p>set time for heart witness. This is the situation for people below the middle class who hope for realization. As for the higher level people and their realization, it is their whole body and mind that unite together. Return to the Lord must be done with the coherence of both the inside and outside person. In your daily living and dealing with people, you need to remember the Lord. This is the superior wisdom. Only the wise people can understand and do it. Those who have yet to achieve this level are difficult to understand.</p> <p>Theme: The endeavour and function of witness is great.</p> <p>Explanation: The function of witness is important. When all things have not yet been formed, the heart of humankind has moved. This is the beginning of good and evil, and the source of principle and desire. Every moment remember the Lord. In the midst of seeing and hearing, consider the uprightness of the Lord and do not fall into the danger of desire. In every event you tirelessly remember the Lord. In your daily work, seek diligently and sincerely with reverence. Do not be lazy and fall into falsehood. Pray in all things lest your body suffers worry. If you don't pray in all things, this may lead to a life of disaster. Thus, the function of witness is important. This witness is the core of self-realization and an affirmation of the teaching.</p> <p>Theme: In witnesses, there are ten rules.</p> <p>Explanation: Rule means the main rules. In each of the five endeavours, there are main rules, holy rules, propriety and secondary endeavour. The main rule is the</p>	<p>只為中人以下者道耳。若上智之人，全體歸真，身心融化，表裡一如一，即日應事接物，未嘗不是念主也。第此上智事，必上智人知之；未至於上智者，則不知也。</p> <p>擇要：念之功用大矣哉！</p> <p>解：念也者，萬事未形，其心已動，為善惡之造端，理欲之根源也。維時時念主不忘則凡視聽言動，皆思主之正，而不陷於人欲之危矣。惟事事念主不忘，則凡日用工夫克盡敬畏之誠，而不流於怠荒之弊矣。一事不念，或貽四體之優；一時不念，或致終身之患。念之為用，顧不大哉！此念主為修道立教之樞要也。</p> <p>擇要：凡為念者，有十制</p> <p>解：制，主制也。五功皆各有主制，有聖則，有典禮，有副功。主制，主所命令也。聖</p>
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<p>rule of the Lord. Holy rule is the act of sages. Propriety is the combination of holy rule and ritual. This has to be practised from the ancient to the present time and is regarded as normal practice. Secondary endeavour means that the individual can seek his resource for realization. Witness includes both heart and mouth witness and has ten rules. Learners need to pay careful attention and experience intimately so that their witness is not meaningless.</p>	<p>則，聖之常行也。典禮，兼主命聖則，為古今之通禮，人事之當然也。副功，則惟各人自任而獨善其身者也。念一功，總其心念口念，有主命十事。學者宜細心玩味，加謹體貼，庶不致念落於虛浮也。</p>
<p>Theme: Recite the witness</p> <p>Explanation: The first of the ten rules is to recite the witness. This witness is discussed in chapter four on meaning and witness. Here, to recite means mouth witness. You recite the witness. Before you pray, you need to know the Lord. To know him intimately, there is no better way than to recite the witness. It is to affirm the truth without error. When the sages teach the way, they require accurate recitation. The rule of sequence of regulations can judge the evil of acts and deeds and the judgment is also in accordance to this recitation.</p>	<p>擇要: 誦辭</p> <p>解: 十制之一，曰誦辭。辭，即諦言第一章，我証之辭也。此口念也。口念而誦此辭者，蓋念主必先識主。識主親切，無過於証之辭。誦之，以示真實無謬也。故聖人教人正道，以誦此言為準。禮法判人邪正順違，以誦此言為定。</p>
<p>Theme: Know the meaning of the witness</p> <p>Explanation: The second rule is to know the meaning of witness. This is to know the meaning of the recitation. Since you recite the witness, you need to know the meaning. If it is merely mouth recitation and not knowing the meaning, you really have not recited at all. Thus, while knowing the meaning is number two in the sequence of regulations; it is number one and most</p>	<p>擇要: 知義</p> <p>解: 二曰知義。義，即我証之辭之義也。蓋既誦其辭，則宜知其義。若徒口誦，而不識夫辭之所以然。不幾與弗誦者等耶？故知義在禮法中，序雖第二，而在近主之道則為第一。何也？近主之</p>

<p>important in the way of realization. This is because to come close to the Lord, the basic requirement is the heart witness which is most important and mouth recitation comes second.</p> <p>Theme: To believe the principle of witness.</p> <p>Explanation: The third rule is to believe the principle of witness. It is to believe what you have recited and witnessed. The correct way is to recite verbally, know the meaning and the heart believes truly the principle. Ordinary people can merely recite verbally and know the witness. The heretics can do likewise. If the heart does not have sincerity, how do you differentiate from the ordinary people? The reason that ordinary people are ordinary is that they do not understand the principle of witness. Heretics are heretics because they do not believe the principle of witness. The knower is the person who knows the witness. The believer is the person who believes the witness. Therefore, we are called Muslims and this term does not apply to any other people.</p> <p>Theme: To obey the way permanently.</p> <p>Explanation: Permanency means to keep the way all the time. You know the principle of witness is right and should always remember it in your heart and never forget it. For example, a traveller needs to follow the path in his journey. He may lose his path and not be able to return home. Another example, a person picks up a treasure. He needs to keep it carefully as if it were treasure and fears losing it. If you face towards the Lord,</p>	<p>責在心，而口其次焉者也。</p> <p>擇要：信斯理</p> <p>解：三曰信斯理，即我証之辭之理也。蓋既誦其辭，且知其義矣。仍必心中誠信其理，為至是之道。夫口誦心知，乃庸眾人所習，異端之所能者也。若無心中誠信，將何以別於庸眾與異端乎？庸眾之所以為庸眾者，不知此理也。異端之所以為異端者，不信此理也。知此理者，謂之知者，信此理者，謂之信士。故穆民之名，獨以稱吾人，而不以稱他人也。</p> <p>擇要：恆斯道</p> <p>解：恆，常也，守也。既誠信此理為至是之道矣，即當時時保守，服膺無失。譬如行路者，必循程依徑，惟恐一涉歧途，即非抵家之路。又如得寶者，必謹守競持，惟恐有一失落，遂成廢棄之</p>
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<p>you have achieved the principle of witness. You need to be vigilant daily and always pious to the Lord. In any movement, do not forget the Lord. In any quietude, remember him. You are afraid to make a mistake, losing your way and unable to return to him. You believe him sincerely; firmly keep your right way. If your whole life does not forget him, you do not need to worry about your life and death. This is the fourth of the ten rules.</p> <p>Theme: If questioned, do not avoid your answer. If asked, do not be slow to teach.</p> <p>Explanation: Someone might ask about the principle of witness. You should answer clearly and without hesitation. This shows that you already believe. Also, it helps the other towards their belief. Some might ask to be taught about the principle of witness. You should use correct recitation to teach them, without any delay and do not pass on the responsibility to anyone else. Thus, we have the principle and pass it on to others who also receive the principle. The first four rules are concerned with you and your understanding. The fifth and sixth rules are about your passing on from you to others so that others can fully understand. The last four rules are concerned with the affirmation of belief without doubt. This can give weight to the argument and get rid of any heresy.</p> <p>Theme: To know clearly the principle that the Lord really exists.</p> <p>Explanation: Three reasons for the principle that the Lord exists. Firstly, it is the principle of creating all</p>	<p>嗟，念者，既得斯道，必朝虔夕惕，動思靜，惟恐一有所失誤，仍為歧異之歸矣。信之者真，守之者定，終身不忘，乃能生死無患也。此十制之四也。</p> <p>擇要：問不諱答，求，不緩授</p> <p>解：有人問此理於我，即明言告之。不得隱諱。所以示已之信，而亦啟人之信也。有人求此理於我，即正言授之，不得延緩，不得推委他人。所以推已之所得，亦使人得之也。前四制，乃已所獨明。此二制，乃因已之明，推以及人，而使之無不明。後四制，則又堅信去疑，折異端，黜邪說之辨難也。</p> <p>擇要：明夫主有之理</p> <p>解：主有之理三：曰造作之</p>
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<p>things. Another principle is the control of all things and lastly the management of all things. What is the principle of creation of all things? There is a maker of every container or thing. For example, a small cup or container must have a craftsman; a knife made by a knife-maker; a house by a builder. There is nothing in this world that naturally exists without being made. The world has visible form and how can there not be a creator? Therefore, it is doubtless to ascertain the existence of a creator Lord Master.</p>	<p>理，曰事為之理，曰執掌之理。何謂造作之理？天下無一器一物，無造作之者。譬如盞盂必有陶工，剪刀必有鐵工，桌椅必有木工，屋宇必有梓材，皆未有無工作，而遂自成其為器物者也。夫天地，亦有形之物也，又豈無造作之者，遂自成為天地乎？以是知天地，必有造作之主無疑矣。</p>
<p>What is the principle of the control of all things? It is humankind that makes the first move. Any ship that sails has a sailor. A racing chariot has a rider. The flying kite has a person that controls the wire. The arrow that hits the bull's-eye has an archer. Without the person, a ship, chariot, kite, the arrow cannot work. Look, the world turns in an orderly fashion and all things continue endlessly. How come there is no one in control if the world continues to turn and things endlessly continue? Therefore, it is impossible to deny the existence of the Lord Master who is in control.</p>	<p>何謂事為之理？天下無一舉一動，無為作之者，譬如舟行必有篙師，車行必有御夫。風鳶凌室，必有人為之提綫飛箭投的，必有人為之發機，未有無操御之人而舟車自行，無提綫發機之人，而鳶箭自舉者也。夫天地如此其運行，萬物如此其生息，又豈無為作之者，而遂自能運行生息乎？以是知天地萬物必有為作之主無疑矣。</p>
<p>What is the principle of management of all things? No matter whether the property is occupied or abandoned, someone does the management. For example, a house has an owner, a garden has a gardener. This applies to all</p>	<p>何謂執掌之理？天下無一物則已，有則未有曠置而無執掌者。譬如房屋必有房屋</p>

<p>containers and things without exception. Now that the world is enormously complex, how can it exist without the existence of a Lord Master who manages all things? Therefore, it is doubtless to ascertain the existence of a Lord Master who manages all things.</p> <p>Theme: To know that the Lord is one.</p> <p>Explanation: Three reasons that we know the Lord is one. Firstly, it is the proof of one; secondly, the proof of family governance and lastly the proof of principle. What is the proof of one? It is from one that you get all other numbers. Number one does not come from two. The Lord initiates the beginning and end of the world. How can there be two? From this point, it is obvious that the Lord is one and not two. What is the proof of family governance? In a family, there must be a head and the family prospers. In a country, there must be one ruler to rule it. No one has seen two parents having the same status and also two emperors governing the same country, resulting in harmonious ruling. Even more, is it possible that the Lord is two as he is and the source of all things? From this you can see the Lord is one and not two.</p> <p>What is the proof of principle? Assuming there are two lords, can the two lords have the same power? Alternatively, can the two lords have different powers? If they have the same power, it is enough just to have one and the second one is superfluous. If there are different powers, it means there is an opposition of powers. When</p>	<p>主人，田園必有田園主人。即至一器一物莫不皆然。況天地若是其大也，萬物若是蕃也，又豈無主宰以為之執掌也乎？以是天地萬物必有執掌之主無疑矣。</p> <p>擇要：主一之証</p> <p>解：主一之証三：曰一數之証，曰齊治之証，曰，義理之証。何謂一數之証？蓋萬數始於一，不始於二。真宰為造化萬有之始，又豈有二乎？現此，則主之只一無二，明矣。何謂齊治之証？蓋必一長而後齊，國必一君而後治，從未見二長同尊，兩君並理，而收齊治之效者。況先天地，而宰制萬化之原者乎？又豈可有二乎？觀此，則主之只一無二，亦明矣。</p> <p>何謂義理之証？設使主有二，將謂二主同能乎？抑二主異能乎？同能，則有一，不需二矣。異能，則有彼此，有強弱矣。有彼此，則有天</p>
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<p>there is opposition, the appearance of the world is not unitary. The stronger one will lord it over the weaker who should not be the lord after all. From this principle, you can see the Lord is one and not two.</p> <p>Theme: The proof that nothing can be comparable to the real Lord</p> <p>Explanation: Comparison means there is something similar. Things can always find other matching things. The true Lord is incomparable. All things have their form, colour, sound and taste and one thing can be distinguished from another. The principle, vital energy and image of things can also find their match. The Lord is unlike any form, image, sound, taste. It does not belong to any principle, and vital energy. What can you compare it with? The root suchness of the Lord is pure without any contamination and outside any human mind and thinking. Not only is its substance incomparable but his subtle function is also incomparable. Not only is his function incomparable but his act is also incomparable.</p> <p>Let's take a look at the creation of the Lord. His creation is lively. Humankind cannot create. For example, an ant, a mosquito, grass, seeds are all full of life. Can humankind create ants, mosquitoes, grass and seeds that have life? In all things, what is more exalted than humankind? Who is cleverer than humankind? From this, we know there is no one similar or comparable to the Lord. Summarizing the argument above, we prove by</p>	<p>地之造化，不應出於一致。有強弱，則強者為主，弱者不應立為主矣。觀此，則主之只一無二，更明矣。</p> <p>擇要：惟主無比之據</p> <p>解：比，謂比似相似也。一切萬有，皆有比似，惟真主似無比似。萬物之所有比似者，因其有形色聲臭之可指也。因其有義理氣數之可擬也。真主不數於形色聲臭，不屬於義理氣數，將何以為比似哉？真主之本然，清淨無著，超於意慮思悟之表。不特其本體無可比擬也，即其妙用，亦無可比似。不特其功能無可比似也，即其為作亦無可比似。</p> <p>試看真主所造，物物皆生，人之所造，物物皆死。即一蟻一蚊，一草一芥，無非生活者。人有能造一蟻蚊一草一芥為生活者乎？萬物之中，莫貴於人，莫靈於人。人莫能似，況不及人者乎？以是知真主絕無比似也。凡此</p>
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<p>using things that are outside us. This is not the most relevant proof. The most relevant proof comes from within us. Humankind has nature and that can prove the existence of the real Lord who is one. This is the most superior and firm proof. Is there any human body merely without nature in the world? Are there two natures in one human body? What can someone say about the form of this nature and how comparable is this nature with the other? If the scholars can learn and explore from within the human self to know the real Lord, they have come over half way.</p> <p>Theme: Know the prophet Muhammad as the sage, the Utmost Sage.</p> <p>Explanation: From the ancient times, there have been many sages. Only Muhammad is the Utmost Sage. He possesses all the virtues and his transformation is clear. He perfectly practises the will of the Lord. He has a long ancestral tradition and exceptional sensitivity. His spirit begins superbly before the foundation of the world. He is the master of all principles and natures. The body of the Sage emerges as the heaven and earth are formed. He is the fruit of all the sages throughout the ages. As an illustration, the heaven and earth symbolize a tree. The Utmost Sage is the seed and also the fruit of the tree. Seed and fruit are ‘not two’. Therefore, while heaven and earth are huge, they are formed into reality by the nurture of the Utmost Sage. The spirits of all sages have</p>	<p>以上諸論，皆借外物而為証，猶非切近之道也。切近，莫過於身。身之有性，足為真主定有，止一，無比之實証也。有有身而無此身之性者乎？有一身之中，而容兩性者乎？有謂此性為如何形，無有一物可以比似者乎？學者能即自己身中參求有得，則認主之理思過半矣。</p> <p>擇要：知夫穆罕默德之為聖也，也聖之至</p> <p>解：千古以來，為聖多矣。而惟穆罕默德為至主。至聖也者，德無不備，化無不通，全體真宰而為用者也。有宗派焉，有感應焉至聖之靈，卓出天地未有之先。為萬有理性之宗。至聖之身，挺生天地既全之後，為萬世聖人之果。天地，譬如一株大樹，至聖其種也，又其果也。果與種，不二也。是故，天之大，莫不胥其孕育而；有萬聖之靈，莫不稟其蔭應而得生。²⁹</p>
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²⁹ The text refers to the diagram of nature principle in bracket.

<p>begun under the shelter of the Utmost Sage. The form of the Utmost Sage belongs to the heir of Adam but his spirit is the ancestor of Adam. His religious tradition unifies all other religions and his collected laws fulfil all other laws. His way is superior to other ways with unbiased accuracy, shining like the sun and moon and as long-lasting as the heaven and earth. According to ancient texts, if humans want to know the Utmost Sage, they need to know the Utmost Sage's religion as described above.</p> <p>The sensory and revelatory faculties²⁷ of the Utmost Sage are superb and he is far superior to all the sages. These include, for example, the seed of the Utmost Sage's shadow appearing on the foreheads of his ancestors. Also, the chest of the Utmost Sage bears a seal which has words written by the angel in his flesh. The light of Muhammad appears on the forehead of Adam. When the ancient Chinese emperor tried to worship a painting of the Utmost Sage, his image in the painting disappeared. The other sages have experienced none of Muhammad's faculties. His sensory and revelatory faculties have long lasting effect and all later generations can confirm that. He received from the Lord the gift of Qur'an and all followers of Islam ... Islam is adaptable to all particular situations and it is passed on from generation to generation without any change to another faith. The way has been prosperous and without any hindrance. Therefore, such [growth] can be a proof of the sensory and revelatory faculties of the Utmost Sage. After examination, humankind can say that his religion has a long tradition, his sensory faculties are miraculous,</p>	<p>是故，其形為阿丹嗣，其靈為阿丹祖，其教統萬教而備，其法集萬法而成，其道卓越萬道而中正，與日月同光，與天壤同久。經謂：凡欲識至聖者，先須認其宗派，此至聖之宗派也。</p> <p>至聖之感應，莫可數窮，而其超越前聖者，可以萬計。若珠丸毓秀，肉印光瑩感神光於阿丹，拜丹青於唐主，皆感應之微末，而亦前古聖人之所未有也。至其感應之垂久，而為天下後世據者，則有主授之經焉，有服教之人焉……適殊域，傳子孫，累世而不易其信。道盛教衍，無往不通。是則，其人為可據也。視其宗派之原委，感應之神奇，為教之正大，自生民以來，未有一人可以幾及，則其為至聖也可知矣。</p>
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²⁷ Literal translation: telepathy.

<p>and his proclamation is accurate and great. Since the beginning of humanity, there has been no other person comparable to the Utmost Sage. Thus, it is obvious that he is known as the Utmost Sage.²⁸</p> <p>Theme: The witness endeavour is accomplished when the ten rules are completed</p> <p>Explanation: If you do not recite the witness, there is no proof of the Lord. Without the meaning of the witness, you do not understand. Without any understanding, the witness has no foundation. Without any faith, there is no solid action. Without perseverance, there is no sincerity. Without any action and sincerity, witness has no effect. When questioned, do not give any answer and thus become a cheat. When asked, do not teach the knowledge and thus become a miser. Cheating and miserliness are the two worst defects in your witness. If you do not know the reality of the Lord, your witness is meaningless. If you do not know the uniqueness of the Lord, your witness is unfocused. The result of meaninglessness and lack of focus is a shaky and even doubting faith. If you do not know the superiority of the Lord, your witness is not pure. Impurity can lead to the rise of superstition and evil thinking. If you do not know the Utmost Sage, Muhammad, you lose direction in your way. Therefore, there is no way for you to return. You enter into deviations. Therefore, if you can complete the ten rules, you can accomplish the endeavour of witness.</p>	<p>擇要：全此十者，然後可充其念之功</p> <p>解：不誦辭，無以証，不知義，無以明，無正無明，則念無基。不信則無實，不恆則無誠，無實無誠，則念無功。諱答者欺，緩受者吝，欺而吝，則念有病。不明主有之理，則念虛。不明主一之理，則念不專。虛而不專，則易至於疑。不明主無比之理，則念雜。念雜，而邪知惡覺起焉。不知穆罕默德之為至聖，則向道無由，歸真無路，而其念不入於傍門歧徑未之有也。是故，念者必全此十制，而後可以充其念之功。</p>
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²⁸ Liu Zhi gave another detailed account in about 900 words based on Chinese historical record to expand his view on the prophet Muhammad. This account is not translated.

<p>Theme: The holy sage says, ‘Witness is the core of all endeavour. It is the source of all goodness. Benevolent people perpetually witness and are free from any worry. People who emphasize realization will not forget the endeavour of witness.</p> <p>Explanation: The core is the backbone of the matter. Source is the beginning of things. All endeavours are achieved through witness. It is like the body that needs a backbone in order to perform normal functions. All good works require the witness endeavour to begin. It is like the primordial energy that creates all things. Witness is the fountain head, leading all the endeavours. If you always keep your witness endeavour, your endeavour is perfect and your virtues plentiful. You are naturally free from worry and anxiety. In all your daily living, your basic practice is to witness to the Lord. If you are serious about realization and seeking human divine unity, should we not emphasize witness as the most important element?</p>	<p>擇要：聖人曰：‘維念，百功之髓，萬善之元，仁者恆念，克終無虞。修道者，甚不可以無念也。</p> <p>解：髓，言其精旨，元，言其根始也。百功資成念，猶百體資成於精髓也。萬善資始於念，猶萬物始於元氣也。念，固滋百功，而統萬善者也。人能恆念，則功成而善足，自可終身無禍亂之虞矣。百務咸以念主為本，況修道為天人會合之機，而可不以念主為要哉？</p>
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